



Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® & State-Wide MLS

March 2, 2021

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairman
House Committee on Finance

RE: H 5458– “An Act Relating to Taxation – Historic Preservation Tax Credits 2013”

Dear Chairman Abney and Committee Members:

On behalf of the more than 6,000 members of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR), thank you for accepting testimony and affording our organization with the opportunity to comment on H 5458.

REALTORS® across Rhode Island appreciate the State's commitment over the last two years to improving access to homeownership and affordable housing. The foundation of our economy is housing. According to the National Association of REALTORS®, the real estate industry accounted for nearly \$12 billion or 18.2% of the gross state product in 2019.¹

At a time when soaring home prices are outpacing supply, the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR) is concerned that the State does not have a plan to address housing needs at all levels. However, we are pleased to see members of the House, once again, fighting to preserve the Historic Tax Credit Program. By repealing the HTC sunset provision, you will be sending a clear message to residents and businesses that the House is making strides in creating more housing opportunities, while preserving the character of many Rhode Island communities.

RIAR cannot think of a more thoughtful economic policy that provides middle-class opportunities than the HTC. Supporting H 5458 will reactivate dormant building locations where middle-class wages are earned and new homeownership opportunities are created. We should all agree that restoring a sense of vibrancy in Rhode Island is overdue.

¹ <https://www.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/documents/2019-state-economic-impact-of-real-estate-activity-ri-04-14-2020.pdf>

Finally, cities and towns across our Rhode Island are struggling to balance their budgets due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why RIAR believes the State must utilize every economic tool available that puts Rhode Island on the right track. Thus, repealing the HTC sunset provision would secure projects currently on the program's waiting list, and generate new local revenue that funds school building repairs, infrastructure enhancements and more.

RIAR respectfully ask the committee and the House of Representatives to keep the Historic Tax Credit Program alive once again and support much-needed housing in Rhode Island. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Salvatore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

David Salvatore
Government Affairs Director