



March 18, 2025

The Honorable Robert Craven
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House Providence,
Rhode Island 02903

Re: Support for House bills 5794 and 5795

Dear Chair Craven, First Vice Chair McEntee, Second Vice Chair Knight, and Distinguished Committee Members,

RIHousing is grateful for the leadership that Speaker Shekarchi and other General Assembly members have shown in continuing to make housing a top priority for the state. The General Assembly has been a key partner to help address the state's critical shortage of affordable housing. We are proud to support those efforts through our membership on the Housing Affordability Commission and through the implementation of approved programs and policies.

In particular, we applaud the Speaker and the sponsors of the package of twelve housing bills that were recently introduced for continuing to think creatively about how to address Rhode Island's housing challenges. Rhode Island is facing a critical housing shortage and residents continue to face rising housing costs. We look forward to working with the General Assembly and other partners in the months ahead to pass legislation that can make a real difference in creating tools and streamlining processes to address the housing crisis.

Several bills from that package of housing legislation are before this Committee tonight. House bill 5794 continues to refine previously passed land use legislation based on input from municipalities and other stakeholders. The bill also includes important improvements such as giving developers more time in the approval process to submit required permits and legal documents, and making the adaptive reuse legislation passed in 2024 even more effective at encouraging redevelopment of these sites as affordable or mixed-income housing and targeting appropriate properties. Bill 5795 would remove the non-binding nature of zoning certificates to allow property owners to rely on the municipal determination of the legality of the present use.

RIHousing believes that both bills will help remove barriers to housing development and urge the Committee's support. We look forward to working with the Committee, the Speaker, and the bill sponsors to achieve the goal of increasing the supply of housing in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Ventura".

Carol Ventura
Executive Director