



March 18, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: Support for HB 5794 – An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Local Planning Board or
Commission; and
HB 5795 – An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Zoning Ordinances**

Dear Chair Craven and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of One Neighborhood Builders, a Rhode Island housing and community development organization based in Providence, I write in strong support of the bills being heard tonight that are part of House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi's 2025 legislative package: House Bills 5794 – introduced by Chair Craven – and 5795 – introduced by Representative Tina Spears. These bills include zoning and land use changes that would streamline housing development processes, facilitating the production of housing for Rhode Islanders earning a variety of incomes.

Rhode Island [had](#) the lowest per capita rate of new housing construction of any U.S. state in 2022, and Rhode Island [has](#) a shortage of approximately 24,000 rental homes that are available and affordable to households earning extremely low incomes (an annual income of \$31,000 for a family of four). One Neighborhood Builders has built almost 600 rental and for-sale homes for low- and moderate-income households, and our colleagues have built hundreds more. However, this is not enough to address our affordable housing needs.

Our state legislature has a critical role to play in ensuring Rhode Islanders have access to quality, safe, and affordable housing. Speaker Shekarchi and the House of Representatives have prioritized smart revisions to zoning and land use policies that reduce barriers to development in communities across RI. This has meaningfully advanced progress and yet, there is more to do. Chair Craven and Rep. Spears' bills represent additional actions the legislature can take to advance housing development.

I strongly encourage the committee to pass these bills. I am happy to talk further about these issues; please feel free to reach out to me at chapman@onenb.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter H. Chapman", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter H. Chapman
President & CEO, One Neighborhood Builders