



March 26, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence RI 02903

**Re: Support for House Bill 8004**

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) and our alliance of members and partners serving low-income Rhode Islanders, I write in support of H8004. We are grateful to Speaker Shekarchi and the sponsor of this legislation Representative Craven for their continued leadership in elevating housing as a priority for Rhode Island and for championing policies that help communities respond to the state's housing shortage.

Rhode Island faces a well-documented and persistent shortage of affordable homes. Earlier this month, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, of which we are a state partner, released their annual report "*The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*," showing Rhode Island has a gap of 23,222 rental homes that are affordable and available to the lowest income renters. Addressing this challenge requires coordinated action across all levels of government, along with strong partnerships between municipalities, housing developers, community-based organizations, and the private sector.

H8004 takes important steps to strengthen Rhode Island's land use and planning framework by reinforcing the role of comprehensive plans, aligning local zoning with those plans, and improving processes for land development. By promoting greater consistency between planning and zoning, H8004 helps reduce uncertainty and barriers that can delay or limit the production of much-needed housing. The bill's updates to the review process for low- and moderate-income housing - including provisions related to density and timelines—are important in helping communities more effectively respond to Rhode Island's ongoing housing shortage.

At a time when we must increase the supply of affordable homes across the state, clearer, more predictable, and more efficient local processes are essential, and H8004 represents a thoughtful approach to advancing these goals and respectfully urge the Committee to support passage. As always, I am available to answer any questions and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or [mlodge@housingnetworkri.org](mailto:mlodge@housingnetworkri.org).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge, Executive Director