



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Rhode Island Department of Housing
315 Iron Horse Way Ste. 101
Providence, RI 02908

January 25, 2024

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Support for H 7062

Dear Chairman Casey:

I write in support of H 7062, which would provide uniform zoning standards for accessory dwelling units (“ADU”). We would like to thank the General Assembly for prioritizing the housing needs of Rhode Islanders and for its continued leadership in advancing housing production proposals.

Increasing housing production is essential to the economic health of our state. Projections based on population growth and household formation rates show that Rhode Island needs to produce between 2,204 and 3,087 housing units each year on average between 2024 and 2030 to keep up with estimated population growth and rates of household formation. These projected values do not model production needed to improve affordability within the state. In 2022, Rhode Island produced 1,371 units, making us the state with the lowest per capita rate of production in the continental United States. These projections serve as evidence that significantly increased housing production is needed in this state.

The lack of uniformity in the ADU standards across the state has been a challenge. In 2021 and 2022, an average of only 58 ADU units were permitted in Rhode Island and an average of 38 ADU units received a certificate of occupancy.

ADUs have been important in other states facing housing affordability challenges. In 2016, reforms in California aimed to facilitate ADU production have prompted rapid growth in the number of ADUs permitted there. Six years after reforms were implemented, ADUs accounted for about 19 percent of all new housing permits in the state in 2022. ADUs offer promising options not only for supporting family members but also for generating rental income which can be helpful in enabling more Rhode Islanders to remain in their homes. ADUs can also be particularly helpful in fostering new units in areas with limited developable parcels and in boosting units without the need for significant new infrastructure investments.

We would like to thank this Committee for your focus on the housing issue. My office is eager to continue our dialogue regarding the details including potential refinements — and to continue collaborating with the sponsors in pursuit of ways of achieving our mutual goals.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Stefan Pryor
Secretary of Housing

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Housing & Municipal Government Committee
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy