



March 11, 2025

Representative Stephen Casey  
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02908

**Re: Audubon Society of Rhode Island Supports H 5310, Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Act**

Dear Chair Casey and members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing

Audubon Society of Rhode Island and our 17,000 members and supporters have made protecting bird, bird habitats, and the habitats of all living things our mission. Conservation is a key tenant of that mission, as is leading on combating climate change, such as through our RePower Audubon campaign to decarbonize all Audubon properties until we reach true zero in 2040.

Housing and environmental organizations such as Audubon have been working together for years to promote safe homes and open space that combined protect dignity, clean air, clean water, and quality of life for all Rhode Islanders. As a member of the state's Land Use Commission, Audubon has heard dozens of presentations from housing policy experts and advocates who have all stated that the state must use every opportunity to fund affordable housing efforts. Research done by these experts shows that conservation as a piece of this development is more than feasible. Research on mental health and environmental benefits on wildlife and people prove it is necessary.

House Bill 5310 reignites the missed opportunities of a commission to provide funding for housing and conservation that has laid dormant since 1990. The current bill changes the make-up of the commission to make it more equitable, provides a method for appointments, and designates a method for grant and philanthropic dollars to be disbursed effectively.

We would like to thank Representative Speakman for her leadership on this issue and all of the cosponsors for supporting this common-sense opportunity. We urge this committee to vote favorably for H 5310.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Phoenix Wheeler (they/them)  
Director of Advocacy