



March 11, 2025

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

Re: Support for House bills 5796, 5797, 5798, 5799, 5800

Dear Chair Casey, First Vice Chair Fogarty, Second Vice Chair Speakman, 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 Low- and Moderate-Income Housing 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, including H5796, H5797, H5798, H5799 and H5800.

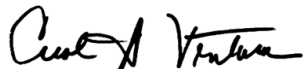
Several of these bills focus on increasing the diversity of housing types allowed under zoning ordinances, a much-needed strategy given that 87% of Rhode Island is zoned for single-family by right according to the Rhode Island Zoning Atlas developed by HousingWorksRI at Roger Williams University. Specifically, H5796 directs municipalities to provide in their zoning ordinances for residential uses other than solely single-family units in areas within the urban services boundary where public water and sewer are available. Similarly, H5798 allows for attached single-family dwelling units such as townhomes in areas already zoned for the same density in a vertical style and H5800 would require municipalities to provide for village or mixed-use zoning to allow residential use in certain commercially zoned districts.

Another important strategy addressed by H5799 is to allow development at the density of the existing neighborhood, as opposed to the zoning ordinance, in certain situations. This bill allows oversized lots to be subdivided if the resulting lots are of a similar proportion to those in the surrounding area.

Each of these bills continues the General Assembly's work to address the housing crisis in Rhode Island.

RIHousing looks 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