



March 20, 2025

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chair, House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Support for HB 5801 – An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Low and Moderate Income Housing;

HB 5802 – An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act;

HB 5803 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – State Building Code; and

HB 5804 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – State Building Code

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of One Neighborhood Builders, a Rhode Island community development organization based in Providence, I write in strong support of House Bills 5801, 5802, 5803, and 5804, which are part of Speaker Shekarchi's legislative package. These bills -- through housing development process reform, electronic permitting expansion, state building code office centralization, and state-owned vacant properties process reform -- would facilitate the production of housing for Rhode Islanders.

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 and administrative processes that reduce barriers to development in communities across RI. This has meaningfully advanced progress and yet, there is more to do. Speaker Shekarchi, Representative Speakman, and Representative Noret's bills represent additional actions the legislature can take to advance housing development.

I 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,

Peter H. Chapman
President & CEO, One Neighborhood Builders