

ATTN: House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing

By: The East Greenwich School Committee

Date: March 11, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of H-5691

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee,

The East Greenwich School Committee stands in strong support of H-5691, which amends the Rhode Island Housing Resources Act of 1998 to require comprehensive assessments for new development projects. We believe this legislation will significantly benefit our communities, particularly in how they impact our schools and other municipal services.

As you know, East Greenwich is experiencing growth and development. While we welcome new residents and the economic opportunities they bring, we must also recognize the challenges that accompany such growth, especially concerning our educational system. The requirements laid out in this bill will ensure that developers provide a thorough analysis of how their projects will affect local schools, transportation, public safety, and other essential services.

The comprehensive assessment mandated by this bill will offer several key benefits:

1. **Informed Decision-Making:** By requiring developers to submit detailed assessments of their projects' impacts, municipalities and school committees can make better-informed decisions. Understanding the fiscal implications on our schools and services will allow us to prepare adequately for any changes resulting from new developments.
2. **Collaboration with Developers:** The bill emphasizes the importance of collaboration between developers and municipal officials, including school representatives. This will foster a cooperative approach to addressing potential challenges and developing mitigation strategies, ensuring that the needs of our schools are considered and prioritized.
3. **Financial Responsibility:** It is vital that the costs associated with these comprehensive assessments are borne by the developers, as stipulated in the bill. This provision alleviates

the financial burden on our municipalities, allowing us to allocate resources more effectively to areas that directly support our students and educational programs.

4. Transparency and Community Engagement: With the requirement for clear guidelines on assessment review and public disclosure, this bill enhances community engagement and accountability. Transparency in how development projects are evaluated will empower residents to participate in discussions about the future of their neighborhoods and schools.

5. Protecting Educational Resources: As we plan for the future, we must safeguard our educational resources. This bill provides a framework for assessing the potential strain on our schools, enabling us to advocate for necessary resources and adjustments to accommodate new residents without compromising educational quality.

In conclusion, the East Greenwich School Committee strongly supports H-5691 as a proactive measure to ensure sustainable development that aligns with the needs of our schools and community. We urge the General Assembly to enact this legislation for the benefit of all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

The East Greenwich School Committee