



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Rhode Island Department of Housing
1 Capitol Hill, 3rd Floor
Providence, RI 02908

April 10, 2025

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

RE: H 5268 – Home-Fit Dwelling Units and H 5374 – Rhode Island Inclusive Home Design Act

Dear Chairman Casey:

While the Department of Housing supports the intent of H 5268 and H 5374, we write to express concern for these two pieces of legislation, which would require most new construction incorporate accessibility-related design features.

The Department aims to increase housing development across the state and for all Rhode Islanders, including increasing accessible housing. However, as currently drafted, this bill will likely have unintended consequences and may aggravate the current housing crisis. Affordable housing development already faces several funding challenges and new requirements may exacerbate these funding challenges.

Additionally, H 5268 would require the Department of Housing adopts rules and regulations and create an incentive program by January 1, 2026. The bill would also allow the Department to approve exceptions to this design requirement if certain standards are met. While the Department appreciates such discretion, we do not foresee the Department having the inhouse design expertise to appropriately review these design standards.

The Department remains open to working with the sponsor to better understand the intent of this incentive program and are open to working towards making progress in this very important space.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

Deborah J. Goddard
Secretary of Housing

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
The Honorable Representative Tina Spears
The Honorable Representative Jennifer Stewart
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy