



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

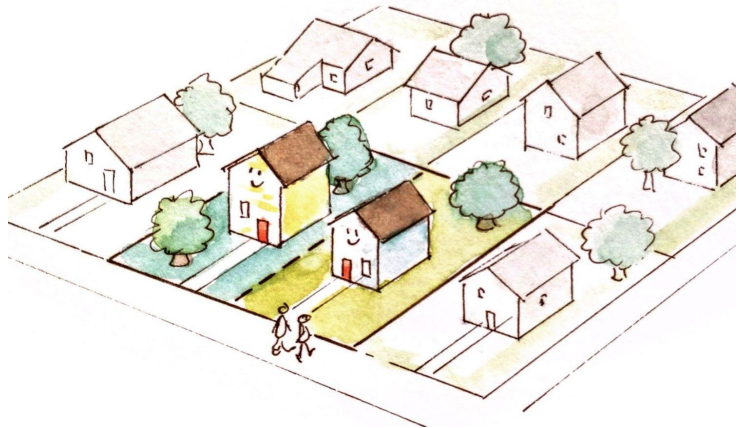
April 10, 2025

RE: Support for House Bill H5963 (Oversized Lot Splits)

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee:

Neighbors Welcome! Rhode Island (“Neighbors Welcome”) is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit and grassroots network of neighbors advocating for more homes in Rhode Island. Our goal is to promote strong and sustainable housing production so that residents across the state and at every stage of life can find the housing they need.

We are writing today in support of the proposed bill H5963, which would allow oversized lots to be subdivided for new homes. For example, a 10,000 square foot lot surrounded by 5,000 square foot lots could be divided in two.



H5963 will:

- **Create new opportunities to build homes** that can utilize existing infrastructure (e.g., in neighborhoods already served by water and sewer).
- **Help make housing more affordable** by reducing land requirements to build a new home. Land represents approximately 60-70% of current home costs in Rhode Island.¹
- **Maintain existing neighborhood character** by requiring newly created lots to be similarly sized to nearby parcels.
- **Help protect farm and forest land** by allowing more homes to be built within existing development footprints instead of greenfield sprawl.

¹ <https://www.aei.org/housing/land-price-indicators/>



According to a 2025 YouGov poll that Neighbors Welcome released in mid-March, 78% of Rhode Islanders believe that their community has too few homes that are affordable to buy or rent, and 57% identify the cost of housing as the top issue facing the state today.

Seventy five percent of voters support allowing a homeowner to split their existing lot, as long as the resulting lots are similar in size to those around it.

Allowing homeowners to accomplish that outcome without needing to seek a zoning variance, which is uncertain, time intensive, and expensive, will reduce practical barriers to getting these added homes built.

We note that H5963 would accomplish similar outcomes to H5799, one of the bills in Speaker Shekarchi's housing package. We also support that bill, which addresses several technical issues that need to be addressed in H5963. For example, recategorizing oversized lot splits as minor rather than administrative subdivisions and revising the reference to "land development projects."

We applaud this bill's sponsor, Chairman Casey, and his cosponsors for their dedication to addressing the housing shortage and ensuring that Rhode Islanders have a safe, dignified, and affordable place to call home.

Neighbors Welcome respectfully urges the Committee to vote in support of the proposed H5963.

Sincerely,

Claudia Wack

Claudia Wack
President
Neighbors Welcome! Rhode Island