



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

April 10, 2025

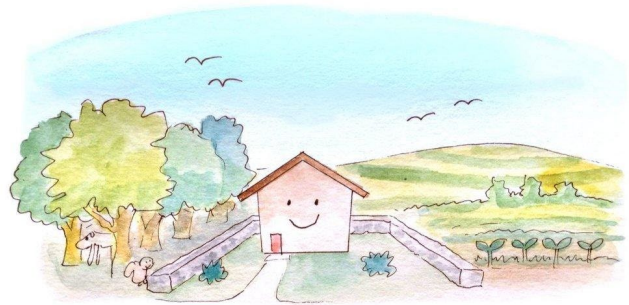
RE: Support for House Bill H5964 (Minimum Lot Size Reform)

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 H5964, a bill that would allow homes to be built on smaller lots, particularly if the parcel is (1) close to transit and (2) served by municipal water and sewer.

Land is expensive, particularly in Rhode Island: land costs currently represent 60-70% of home prices.¹ Mandatory large-lot requirements therefore directly affect the price of local homes. Building homes on smaller parcels used to be common practice in Rhode Island's cities and village centers, yet is no longer possible without special zoning exemptions that cost significant time and money. **At present, 38% of the state's land area is zoned for one single-family home on two or more acres.**



H5964 will:

- Allow a home to be built on **2,500 square feet** for any lot served by municipal water and sewer, and located within quarter-mile of a transit stop;

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



- Allow a home to be built on **5,000 square feet** (about the size of a basketball court) for any lot served by municipal water and sewer; and
- Allow a home to be built on **one acre** (about the size of a football field) statewide, for any lot that meets state standards for drinking wells, septic systems, and wetland protections. H5964 will not change any of those standards.



Pictured: A historic Wickford Village home on 3,300 square feet of land.

According to a 2025 YouGov poll released by Neighbors Welcome 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.

Eighty-one percent of Rhode Islanders support allowing smaller homes on smaller lots, particularly those with access to infrastructure and transit.

Both experts and average people agree that allowing smaller home sizes, particularly in existing communities with water, sewer, and transit, makes sense. This smart and practical solution will allow more homes to be built, splitting expensive land costs across more families, helping to reduce the cost of homes.



We applaud this bill's sponsors, Representative Cherie Cruz, and her 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 H5964.

Sincerely,

Claudia Wack

Claudia Wack
President
Neighbors Welcome! Rhode Island