



June 4, 2025

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

Re: In Opposition of House Bills 6163, 6176, 6177, 6178, 6179, 6180, 6181, 6183, 6184, 6185, 6213, 6214, and 6215

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee:

The mission of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) is to increase the supply of safe, healthy, and affordable homes in thriving communities. We have a membership of 20 nonprofit affordable housing developers who own and operate more than 7,000 long-term rental and homeownership units for low- and moderate-income households. We are also the backbone organization for Homes RI, a coalition of 80+ organizations working together in support of our mission to increase affordable housing supply. On behalf of HNRI and those we serve, **I write to express my strong opposition to several proposed housing bills (H6163, 6176, 6177, 6178, 6179, 6180, 6181, 6183, 6184, 6185, 6213, 6214, 6215) introduced on behalf of the Town of Tiverton**

Over the last four legislative sessions, Rhode Island state policymakers have responded to our statewide housing crisis with bold action to address a broad swath of barriers that have made residential development challenging, coupled with making significant financial investments to stimulate housing production. These investments and policy changes spearheaded by House leadership have been critical in making progress in meeting the housing needs of all Rhode Islanders. The proposed bills, if implemented, would hinder, or outright reverse, this progress not only in the Town of Tiverton but potentially statewide. Below, I've highlighted our major concerns with the proposed legislation:

1. Restrictive Measures on Affordable Housing Development:

Many of these bills introduce constraints that could hinder the development of affordable homes. For instance, H6177 and H6180 impose additional requirements on comprehensive permit projects, potentially delaying or deterring the use of this important tool and affecting the potential construction of much-needed affordable and market rate homes.

2. Potential for Increased Development Costs:

Bills like H6184, which mandates two parking spaces per unit, increase construction costs and restrict land available for residential use. Requirements that drive up costs, which parking minimums notoriously do, create another additional barrier to desperately needed residential development and affordable housing. Additionally, there is no evidence or data

that supports the need to require all housing units to provide this level of parking and is contrary to the data we do have around household formation and a continuing trend of smaller households.

3. Inconsistencies with Statewide Housing Goals:

The proposed legislation conflicts with the State's broader objectives to increase our housing stock as laid out within the Housing 2030 plan. Implementing these measures undermines statewide efforts to address the housing crisis, and sets a dangerous precedent of enabling communities to circumvent their obligation to provide a range of housing opportunities to their residents, perpetuating the very problem we are trying to solve.

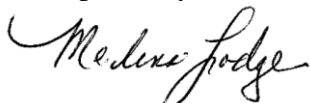
4. Risk of Exacerbating Housing Inequities:

By imposing additional barriers to affordable housing development, these bills disproportionately affect low- and moderate-income families, limiting their access to safe and affordable homes, and raise serious legal implications for fair housing practices in this particular community as well as statewide.

Overall, if enacted development in Tiverton would become so difficult and restrictive that the likely outcome would be that developers wouldn't even bother to attempt to and would look to develop elsewhere or not at all.

The General Assembly has made significant strides to advance housing affordability and accessibility in Rhode Island under both House and Senate leadership. We applaud the efforts of State leaders to move in this direction, and it is our position that these bills are clearly in opposition to our State housing goals and needs and if enacted, would be harmful. For the reasons above, we strongly and respectfully urge the Committee to oppose these bills. As always, I can be reached at (401) 721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org for any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge, Executive Director