



March 5, 2026

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

Re: Support for House Bills 8000, 8001, 8002, 8003, 8004, 8005, 8006, 8007

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) and our alliance of members and partners serving low-income Rhode Islanders, I write to express our appreciation for the package of legislation (House bills 8000 – 8007) before you today aimed at continuing to address Rhode Island’s housing crisis. We are grateful to Speaker Shekarchi and the bill sponsors for their sustained leadership in elevating housing as a priority for Rhode Island and for championing policies that help communities respond to the state’s housing shortage.

Rhode Island faces a well-documented and persistent shortage of affordable homes. In fact, today, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, of which we are a state partner, released their annual report “*The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes,*” showing Rhode Island has a gap of 23,222 rental homes that are affordable and available to the lowest income renters. Addressing this challenge requires coordinated action across all levels of government, along with strong partnerships between municipalities, housing developers, community-based organizations, and the private sector.

We appreciate proposals that seek to modernize land use policies and expand opportunities for housing development, including measures related to infill development, adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings, and zoning and planning tools that can help communities accommodate additional homes. We also recognize the importance of proposals that recognize the needs of residents experiencing homelessness, and that strengthen coordination between municipalities and the state. Efforts that improve coordination, clarify regulations, and support municipalities in advancing housing solutions can help ensure that communities across the state are better positioned to contribute to solving our statewide housing challenges. Regarding HB8006, which relates to taxes on qualifying affordable developments, we respectfully wish to offer suggestions to clarify applicability and implementation and will be happy to work with the bill sponsors on this important legislation that will impact nonprofit housing developers.

Rhode Island’s housing shortage affects households across all income levels, but it is felt most acutely by low- and moderate-income residents, renters, older adults, and people who experience housing insecurity due to lack of affordability. We appreciate the Committee’s leadership in considering this package of legislation and look forward to continued partnership in advancing solutions that increase the supply of safe, healthy, affordable homes, and ensure that policy implementation supports housing production and stability for the Rhode Islanders who need it most. As always, I am available to answer any questions the Committee may have and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Melina Lodge, Executive Director