



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 8003 – RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND LAND USE ACT

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we are supportive of this proposal, which would amend various provisions relative to adaptive reuse projects on state-owned property. We believe this legislation provides a framework to help municipalities address the housing challenges facing Rhode Island. We also recommend incorporating feedback from our cities and towns as the bill moves through the legislative process to ensure it reflects local needs and addresses practical considerations on the ground for our members.

The League recognizes the need for innovative solutions that leverage available resources, and we appreciate the bill's intent to streamline the adaptive reuse of vacant state- and municipal-owned buildings. By allowing the redevelopment of these underutilized properties into housing, and amending the redevelopment program to convert municipal schools, this legislation seeks to create new opportunities for much-needed housing while making efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Given the significant community impact that adaptive reuse projects can have, we also believe it may be beneficial to consider opportunities for meaningful public engagement and alignment with locally adopted comprehensive plans. Ensuring that redevelopment efforts are consistent with municipal planning goals can help promote transparency, community support, and long-term sustainability while maintaining the efficiencies the legislation seeks to achieve. We would welcome further discussion on how these considerations might be thoughtfully incorporated.

We are still in the process of gathering input from our diverse membership. Each of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns has unique housing needs and challenges, and we are committed to ensuring that their voices are heard in shaping policy. We look forward to working with the sponsor and other stakeholders to refine the bill's language as needed to best serve our municipalities.

As this legislation is part of a broader effort to modernize housing policy, we welcome the opportunity to review it in the context of other related measures. We remain committed to working collaboratively with the General Assembly, stakeholders, and local officials to ensure that its implementation is practical, workable, and aligned with municipal needs. We look forward to keeping the dialogue open as the legislation advances and to collaborating on any refinements that further ensure safe, practical, and sustainable implementation at the local level.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of Rhode Island's municipalities and for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.R.R.', written in a cursive style.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Municipal Government and Housing