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RE: H-8006 to be heard Thursday, March 5, 2026
Municipal Government and Housing Committee
AGAINST

To the Honorable Members of the R.I. House of Representatives,
Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

EXPANDING A BAD IDEA IS NOT A GOOD IDEA!

I am writing to formally express my strong opposition to the current housing bill under consideration. While the need for affordable housing is a statewide discussion, this specific legislation is flawed by design, placing an unsustainable burden on the taxpayers of Woonsocket and similarly situated communities.

1. The "Tax Shift" Burden on Seniors

Woonsocket already carries a significant portion of the state's affordable housing inventory (see list below). This bill expands the definition of "affordable" without providing a **mandated increase in state aid** to offset the loss of local tax revenue. When I last received an impact statement from the Woonsocket tax assessor several years ago, the negative impact on tax revenue that was shifting to other taxpayers was over \$750,000. I am certain that figure has grown and will expand again this year with the completion of 70 units at Millrace in Woonsocket.

- **The Impact:** All taxpayers and especially those on fixed and semi-fixed incomes, many of whom have lived in their single-family homes for decades—will see their property tax burdens increase to subsidize these developments.

2. Lack of Recapture (Claw back) Provisions

The bill allows for a 30-year phase-out of tax obligations for developers, but it lacks a vital "recapture" mechanism. Also, if a qualifying property is sold to a new buyer

with a 30-year financial commitment, does the 8% reset for the new buyer? I don't see any language to control roll over benefit to new buyers.

- **The Solution:** If a property owner sells a subsidized development for a significant profit within that 30-year window, the city should be legally entitled to recover the lost tax revenue from those profits. Without this, the bill serves as a taxpayer-funded windfall for wealthy property owners.

3. Artificial Cost Inflation

By mandating specific labor and apprenticeship requirements, the bill ensures that "affordable" housing becomes the most expensive housing to build. This high cost necessitates deeper tax breaks and larger subsidies, further draining the municipal resource pool.

4. Failure to Require Burden Sharing by Communities not achieving 10% requirement.

There is no provision to assess a share of the tax loss on the communities not meeting the statutory 10% affordable housing obligation while they skillfully avoid participating in this non-mandated program designed to unfairly burden urban centers. A good bill would recognize that inequity and provide for burden sharing.

Conclusion

Expanding on a bad idea is not a solution. This bill fails to protect the existing middle-class and elderly constituents who are already under growing cost pressures. Unless this bill includes a **dollar-for-dollar revenue replacement** for the city and a **profit-recovery provision**, it should be rejected.

Thank you for your consideration of my objection to this bill and please carefully consider the negative implications for so many of your constituents.

Sincerely,

John F. Ward

Rhode Island Affordable Housing by Municipality

Municipality	LMIH Units	LMIH %	Goal Met?
Barrington	233	3.72%	No
Bristol	670	7.21%	No
Burrillville	663	10.19%	Yes
Central Falls	1,451	17.76%	Yes
Charlestown	148	3.99%	No
Coventry	978	6.65%	No
Cranston	2,122	6.23%	Yes*
Cumberland	975	6.53%	No
East Greenwich	394	7.21%	No
East Providence	2,347	10.64%	Yes
Exeter	197	7.67%	No
Foster	38	2.09%	No
Glocester	102	2.54%	No
Hopkinton	265	7.50%	No
Jamestown	110	4.20%	No
Johnston	1,140	9.15%	No
Lincoln	760.5	8.01%	No
Little Compton	11	0.65%	No
Middletown	460	6.13%	No
Narragansett	334	4.60%	No
New Shoreham	54	7.40%	No
Newport	2,046	17.27%	Yes
North Kingstown	1,066	9.01%	No
North Providence	1,291	8.13%	Yes*
North Smithfield	439	8.26%	No
Pawtucket	3,517	10.41%	Yes
Portsmouth	268	3.50%	No
Providence	12,442	16.59%	Yes
Richmond	107	3.45%	No
Scituate	56	1.32%	No

Municipality	LMIH Units	LMIH %	Goal Met?
Smithfield	463	5.85%	No
South Kingstown	664	5.72%	No
Tiverton	449.5	6.01%	No
Warren	373	6.95%	No
Warwick	2,202	5.78%	Yes*
West Greenwich	45	1.77%	No
West Warwick	1,520	10.60%	Yes
Westerly	706	6.45%	No
Woonsocket	3,371	17.09%	Yes