



**Executive Office of Housing**  
State of Rhode Island  
One Capitol Hill, 3rd Floor  
Providence, RI 02908

March 18, 2026

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

Re: H 8021

Dear Chairman Casey:

The Executive Office of Housing (“EOH”) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on H 8021, which aims to increase the number of accessible units in Rhode Island, however, we respectfully submit this letter of concern.

H 8021 would apply to all new single-family, townhouse, and multifamily construction, with requirements varying based on whether the development includes an elevator. For developments without an elevator, at least one level must comply with Type C standards; for developments with an elevator, all units must comply with Type C standards. This bill exempts manufactured housing, adaptive re-use within the existing building envelope, or redevelopment of existing buildings from these requirements. EOH supports these exemptions as these types of developments often face financial and layout constraints. While Type C standards are more feasible than Type A and Type B standards, EOH notes that applying visitability standards to every unit could reduce the overall number of units that are built due to space requirements.

EOH supports exploring additional ways to incorporate accessible design requirements into projects that receive state funding. Currently, if a new construction or a substantial rehabilitation includes five or more units, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (“UFAS”) requires at least 5% of the units (or at least one unit) be accessible. EOH and RI Housing incentivize Type A units by awarding two additional points for developments with no less than 10% accessible units as defined by the UFAS in the State’s Qualified Allocation Plan (“QAP”), which is used to issue funding awards for affordable housing developments.

Affordable housing development is essential to ensuring all Rhode Islanders have equal access to housing, and accessibility remains a priority. In 2024, RI Housing undertook a comprehensive update to the Design and Construction Standards and included a range of new accessibility

features. Currently, RI Housing is finalizing an analysis of the impact different increased accessibility requirements would have on housing developments of different types. This analysis is essential in determining reasonable solutions for these important priorities and therefore, EOH respectfully recommends the Committee reviews this analysis once it is public.

EOH appreciates your consideration of these concerns and welcomes the opportunity to continue to collaborate with the bill's sponsor and the Committee.

Sincerely,

Deborah J. Goddard  
Secretary of Housing

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
The Honorable Jennifer A. Stewart  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy