



Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® & State-Wide MLS

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Representative Stephen Casey  
House Committee on Housing & Municipal Government  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

### **RE: AN ACT RELATING TO FARMLAND PRESERVATION ACT**

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of H.8014. RIAR represents more than 5,900 licensed real estate professionals who work every day in the listing, sale, leasing, management, and appraisal of residential and commercial real estate and who are committed to stable housing markets to make Rhode Island a better place to call home.

Rhode Island's agricultural lands play an important role in the state's economy, food systems, and rural character. H.8014 provides targeted protections that help ensure farms are not burdened with infrastructure costs that they did not request and may not benefit from.

#### **Prevents Farms from Bearing the Cost of Unrequested Utility Expansion**

Water and sewer infrastructure expansions can be costly, particularly when utilities are extended along public roadways past existing properties. H.8014 ensures that agricultural operations are not required to pay for water utility extensions that they did not request and may not intend to use.

This protection helps prevent situations where farms are:

- Assessed significant fees for infrastructure installed primarily to serve future development
- Required to absorb costs for utilities they do not need or use
- Placed under financial pressure due to infrastructure improvements initiated by others

By limiting these assessments, H.8014 helps maintain the economic viability of agricultural operations.

#### **Supports Rhode Island's Farmland Preservation Goals**

Rhode Island has long recognized the importance of preserving farmland and supporting agricultural activity across the state. H.8014 advances these goals by helping ensure that farms are not unintentionally pressured toward development due to unexpected infrastructure costs.

Reducing these financial burdens can:

- Help farmers maintain long-term agricultural use of their land
- Reduce financial incentives to convert farmland to non-agricultural development
- Support broader state and local farmland preservation initiatives

Policies that protect working farmland help sustain Rhode Island's agricultural economy and rural landscapes.

### **Maintains Appropriate Safeguards if Land Use Changes**

Importantly, H.8014 includes provisions ensuring that these protections apply only while the land remains in agricultural use. If the property is later developed or transferred for non-agricultural purposes within the specified timeframe, the exemption becomes void and assessments may apply.

This framework helps balance farmland protection with fairness by ensuring that properties benefiting from future development contribute appropriately to infrastructure costs.

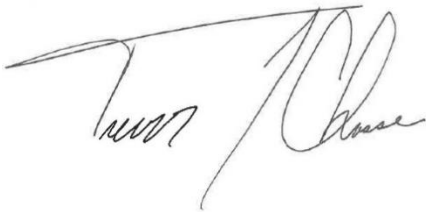
### **Conclusion**

RIAR supports thoughtful policies that protect working farmland and strengthen Rhode Island's agricultural economy. H.8014 provides targeted protections that help ensure farms are not burdened with infrastructure costs for utility extensions they did not request or use.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® respectfully urges favorable consideration of H.8014.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trevor J. Chasse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Trevor J. Chasse  
Director, Government Affairs  
Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®