



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

March 31, 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 7445

Dear Chairman Casey:

The Executive Office of Housing (“EOH”) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments of respectful opposition to House Bill 7445, which aims to encourage faith-based organizations to develop affordable and mixed-use housing on land they own as a by-right use. This bill creates new procedural definitions that are unclear and far exceed current density incentives.

H 7445 creates a new “ministerial review” that is defined as “a non-discretionary approval process based solely on objective standards without public hearings or subjective judgement.” This prohibits municipalities from holding projects to the standard review process and required findings that are established in state law and are known by municipalities, developers, and the public. Moreover, it does not establish what the new “objective standards” would be, therefore leaving all 39 municipalities to determine them for themselves. Notably, there are no requirements for affordable housing, but the bill allows municipalities to adopt ordinances to this effect. This new approval process and the absence of clear resolutions on these specific issues will complicate and convolute the process for applicable development applications. Lastly, this bill conflicts with several existing provisions in state law due to its disproportionate implications. For example, a project going through this new ministerial review process would receive less evaluation than a minor subdivision/land development project despite the potential for these housing projects to include high density, bonus incentives for height and floor to area ratio, and waivers of parking.

The State Housing Guide Plan, *Housing 2030*, calls upon municipalities to build more housing while supporting their ability to determine where and how they can meet their housing goals. H 7445 requires a density allotment of 30-unit per acre and a density bonus of up to 50-units per acre, which far exceeds the density bonuses in the current comprehensive permits process where the maximum density bonus is 12-units per acre.

EOH would like to thank the Chairman and the sponsor for the opportunity to share these concerns with the Committee and remains available to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Deborah J. Goddard
Secretary of Housing

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