



March 31, 2026

The Honorable Stephen Casey
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

RE: Opposition H8015

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) and our members and partners serving low-income Rhode Islanders, I write to express our opposition to **H8015**, which would amend the definition of affordable housing to count accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in municipalities that do not impose minimum lot size requirements for their development.

We appreciate the sponsor's intent to encourage municipalities to ease barriers to ADU production. Expanding opportunities for smaller, more flexible housing types can play an important role in addressing our housing shortage. However, **H8015**, as drafted, would count units toward a community's 10% affordable housing goal without ensuring those units are actually available or affordable to low-income households.

There are no guardrails in the bill to guarantee that these units are publicly available, rented on a consistent basis, or priced at levels that meet affordability standards. As a result, the proposal risks crediting municipalities for units that may not serve the populations the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act is intended to support.

In recent years, the General Assembly has already expanded what qualifies as low- and moderate-income housing in several ways- including expanding income eligibility for New Shoreham, the counting of market rate rental units under certain Comprehensive Permit applications, the counting of mobile and manufactured homes on resident owned land and inclusion of mobile rental assistance vouchers. While each change may have been well-intentioned, the cumulative effect has been to broaden the definition without necessarily increasing the supply of deeply and sustainably affordable homes. If our shared goal is to develop a robust stock of long-term affordable housing, we should be cautious about further diluting the standard by counting units that do not reliably meet it.

That said, we agree there is real value in incentivizing municipalities to reduce barriers to housing production, in particular smaller homes such as ADUs. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the bill's sponsor and municipal partners to identify approaches that both encourage production and maintain the integrity of our affordable housing goals.

I am available to answer any questions you might have and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully submitted,


Melina Lodge, MCP
Executive Director