



April 7, 2026

Honorable Chairman Stephen Casey

House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H-8032 – An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Low and Moderate Income Housing

To Chairman Casey and Committee Members:

Please accept the following comments from our organization, the RI Chapter of the American Planning Association, regarding this bill, which amends Chapter 45-53-4, the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act, to eliminate existing mandated housing densities for lands used for public drinking water supply waters. The act would also require that the housing densities not exceed the availability of onsite drinking water supplies, introduce pollution making drinking water unsuitable for use, and stay within the capacity limits of any public water or sewer system.

APA-RI supports this bill, as the proposed amendment would protect local drinking water quality by accounting for the capacity of a parcel's environmental conditions when determining appropriate levels of density for a proposed housing project. As you know, the existing structure of density bonuses under this act mandates that communities grant a minimum of three units per acre, regardless of field conditions or environmental context. The existing formula does not consider the underlying zoning of the parcel, nor does it account for impacts like traffic or the lack of open space or site amenities for the new development. The existing system of density bonuses does not provide any protection for areas that have been developed beyond carrying capacity, or those that could be built beyond capacity under this act. The LMIH Act needs this proposed refinement to protect communities that rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply and to prevent oversaturation of development in environmentally sensitive areas.

APA-RI supports this bill to amend the LMIH Act to protect local drinking water supply watersheds, and encourages the continued use of scientific data so that future development in Rhode Island is not only productive, but is safe and sustainable for existing and new residents alike.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sean Henry and Gregory Guertin
Legislative Committee Co-Chairs

cc RI League of Cities and Towns