



April 15, 2026

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

**Re: In Opposition H7123, H7124, H7125, H7292, H7294, H7295, H7297, H7372, H7492, H8034, H8041, H8279, and H8281**

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island, our member agencies, and the low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders we serve, I write in strong opposition to **H7123, H7124, H7125, H7292, H7294, H7295, H7297, H7372, H7492, H8034, H8041, H8279, and H8281**. Collectively, these bills propose changes to the Low and Moderate Income Housing Act and to local land use and zoning regulations in the towns of Tiverton, Johnston, Portsmouth, and Smithfield that would undermine our state's ability to address its housing crisis.

Over the past five legislative sessions, Rhode Island's housing shortage has rightly taken center stage. A combination of historically low housing inventory, rising demand, and escalating costs has placed safe and affordable housing out of reach for far too many residents—especially those with the lowest incomes. This crisis is the result of decades of underproduction, restrictive local land use policies, low vacancy rates, chronic underinvestment in affordable housing, and wages that have not kept pace with housing costs. The path forward is clear: Rhode Island must build its way out of this crisis.

The bills under consideration would move us in the opposite direction. If enacted, they would hinder—or even reverse—the progress the state has made in streamlining residential development and expanding housing opportunities. Individually and collectively, these proposals would:

**1. Impose new barriers to housing development**

Additional constraints on comprehensive permit projects would delay approvals, discourage development, and reduce the production of both affordable and market-rate homes. At a time when we need to accelerate housing creation, these measures would slow it down.

## **2. Increase the cost and uncertainty of development**

Introducing varying requirements across municipalities creates inconsistency and unpredictability. Developers would face increased costs due to additional time, technical requirements, and compliance burdens—costs that ultimately reduce the feasibility of building new housing.

## **3. Undermine statewide housing goals**

These bills conflict with the objectives outlined in Rhode Island’s Housing 2030 plan. Allowing municipalities to impose restrictive measures weakens the state’s coordinated response to the housing crisis and sets a troubling precedent that could erode progress statewide.

## **4. Exacerbate housing inequities**

By making it harder to build affordable housing, these proposals would disproportionately harm low- and moderate-income households. They also raise serious concerns about fair housing and equal access to opportunity across communities.

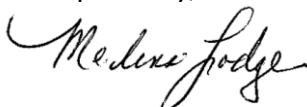
The cumulative effect of this legislation would be clear: development in Tiverton, Johnston, Portsmouth, and Smithfield would become so difficult and restrictive that many developers would simply choose not to build at all. At a time when Rhode Island urgently needs more housing, we cannot afford policies that discourage it.

The General Assembly has made meaningful progress in advancing housing affordability and accessibility, and we commend state leaders for their commitment to this issue. However, these bills run counter to those efforts and would ultimately do more harm than good.

For these reasons, we respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to oppose **H7123, H7124, H7125, H7292, H7294, H7295, H7297, H7372, H7492, H8034, H8041, H8279, and H8281**

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions and can be reached at (401) 721-5680 ext. 104 or [mlodge@housingnetworkri.org](mailto:mlodge@housingnetworkri.org).

Respectfully,



Melina Lodge, MCP  
Executive Director