



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 8387 – AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to respectfully express our opposition to House Bill 8387, which would require all municipal zoning ordinances to be amended to prohibit minimum lot sizes greater than 5,000 square feet for residential buildings containing between one and four dwelling units on lots served by public water and sewer.

The League appreciates the urgency of addressing Rhode Island's housing challenges and supports thoughtful, locally driven strategies to expand housing opportunities. However, as drafted, House Bill 8387 represents a significant preemption of municipal zoning authority and would impose a one-size-fits-all mandate on all 39 cities and towns, regardless of their unique planning goals, infrastructure capacity, and community context.

Minimum lot size requirements are a fundamental component of local land use planning. Municipalities rely on these standards to manage growth, ensure compatibility with existing neighborhood character, and align development with infrastructure capacity, including schools, transportation networks, and public safety services. This legislation would eliminate that discretion in areas served by public water and sewer, effectively mandating increased density without providing municipalities the ability to tailor implementation to local conditions.

While the bill's focus on areas with existing infrastructure and its encouragement of small-scale residential development are constructive elements, the absence of meaningful guardrails, such as flexibility for local dimensional standards, design considerations, and impact mitigation, raises significant concerns. Additionally, the requirement that all municipalities amend their zoning ordinances would create administrative and financial burdens at the local level.

For these reasons, the League must respectfully oppose House Bill 8387 as drafted. We remain committed to working collaboratively with the General Assembly and stakeholders to identify balanced approaches that expand housing opportunities while preserving the essential role of municipalities in local planning and land use decisions.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We stand ready to serve as a resource and look forward to working with the Administration and General Assembly as this proposal continues to develop.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Municipal Government and Housing