



May 26, 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 of H8469, H8470, and H8472

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island, our member agencies and community partners, and the low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders we serve, I write in opposition to **H8469, H8470, H8472**, which propose harmful changes to the State's Low and Moderate Income Housing Act and Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act.

The cost of housing—including labor, construction, rental and sale prices, utilities, and insurance—has risen dramatically since 2019, while incomes have not kept pace. Expanding affordable housing remains a clear priority for Rhode Islanders. In 2024, more than 60% of voters supported the Housing Opportunities Bond, underscoring broad public support for addressing this crisis. State policymakers responded by examining barriers to housing development and making significant investments to stimulate production. These policy changes and investments have been critical to making progress toward meeting the housing needs of all Rhode Islanders.

Public concern about housing affordability is both widespread and well documented. In the summer of 2025, the RI Survey Initiative at the University of Rhode Island found that 93% of respondents were concerned about the high cost of housing.

Rhode Island continues to face a severe shortage of affordable homes. Last month, the National Low Income Housing Coalition released its annual report, *The Gap: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*, showing that Rhode Island is short 23,222 rental homes that are affordable and available to the lowest-income renters. This figure reflects only the needs of the lowest-income households and does not account for additional demand among those in higher income brackets who still qualify under the low- and moderate-income definition. Addressing a challenge of this scale requires coordinated action across all levels of government, along with strong partnerships among municipalities, developers, community-based organizations, and the private sector.

The General Assembly has made meaningful progress in advancing housing availability and affordability under both House and Senate leadership in recent years and we commend these

efforts. However, **H8469, H8470, H8472** run counter to the state's housing goals and the needs of Rhode Islanders.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to oppose these bills. As always, I am happy to answer any questions and can be reached at (401) 721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge, MCP
Executive Director