

To: Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee

Subject: Support for S 2691

Dear Chair Bissaillon and Committee members:

Our ability to provide clean water for our communities should be a priority, it is an integral part of public health, safety and welfare. Regardless of community size or location, we depend on availability of water; in particular water which is currently safe to drink without treatment. This category is considered GA & GAA in Rhode Island.

S 2691 would serve to consider this non-renewable resource and document capacity in relation to significant increases in housing density bonuses. Currently, density bonuses allow for a greater than 1000-fold increase; we must look at the big picture to understand impacts and implications of goals for affordable housing rather than within a limited narrow lens. This would prevent the cumulative impact of capacity reduction or loss by a city or town.

In Massachusetts, the Cape Cod Commission, well aware of historical water infrastructure capacity and challenges, initiated an analysis for every Cape Cod community prior to development of housing legislation. Understanding the potential financial, logistical and environmental implications of loss and degradation of water quality and quantity is of utmost importance. Taking action to prevent same should be a priority.

I have been involved in land use policy for 30 years, and am concerned about our ability as a State to protect our water resources. We have had drought conditions in recent years, negatively impacting wide ranging sectors of our communities: residential, farms, and commercial uses. In many cases watering restrictions have been put in place; in 2025 restrictions in the Southern part of the State were in place until the end of October. This bill provides a practical adjustment to the LMI Act.

Thank you for your consideration,

Maria Mack