RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS | Distinctive Communities Powerful Alliance

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Jacob Bissaillon, Chair
Senate Housing and Municipal Government
Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SENATE BILL 2691 – AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- LOW AND MODERATE INCOME HOUSING

Dear Chair Bissaillon and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express our support for Senate Bill 2691, which proposes important amendments to the Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Housing Act to eliminate existing mandated housing densities for lands used for drinking water, including public drinking water supply watersheds and groundwater classified as GAA. The bill also requires that proposed housing densities not exceed the availability of onsite drinking water supplies, avoid introducing pollution that would render drinking water unsuitable, and remain within the capacity of any public water or sewer system.

These amendments reflect a responsible and necessary approach to protecting Rhode Island's most vital resource: safe and reliable drinking water. Maintaining the quality and availability of drinking water is a critical health and safety concern for our communities. Unchecked density increases in sensitive water supply areas could place undue stress on municipal water systems, create contamination risks, and potentially lead to significant public health and environmental consequences. Experience has shown that excessive housing densities in sensitive water supply areas can have serious consequences for drinking water quality and availability, creating challenges that are costly and difficult for municipalities and water suppliers to address.

At the same time, we recognize and support the need for additional housing. Senate Bill 2691 looks to strike an appropriate balance: it does not prevent municipalities from working with developers to responsibly increase housing densities where feasible; rather, it ensures that such development is aligned with the capacity and safety of our drinking water systems.

Protecting public health and drinking water while supporting responsible housing development is essential for sustainable growth and community well-being across Rhode Island.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our perspective and for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of Senate Housing and Municipal Government