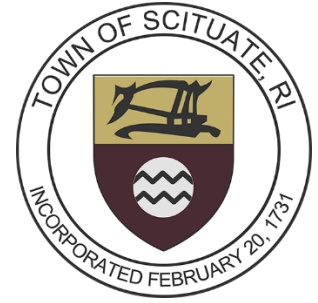




*Town of Scituate
Rhode Island
Conservation Commission
and
Land Trust*



Senate Housing and
Municipal Government Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

March 25, 2026

RE: Support S 2691 Low and Moderate Income Housing

Dear Chairman Bissailon and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Scituate Conservation Commission and Scituate Land Trust, I respectfully urge the Committee to adopt S 2691. I commend the sponsor of this important legislation, Senator Victoria Gu, and the co-sponsors, Senators Euer, DiMario, Murray, and Burke for their leadership in recognizing the need to reform Rhode Island's Low and Moderate Income (LMI) Housing Act to encourage more responsible housing development.

This bill provides **common sense amendments to accommodate low and moderate income housing without negatively impacting the quantity or quality of RI's precious and irreplaceable drinking water supplies**. The bill also adds important language that the **capacity** of public water or sewer systems be documented to support the proposed increase in housing density before a development can be approved. The current law only requires developers to cite that public water or sewer systems are available. It is irresponsible to build more housing in areas that would exceed the capacity of either drinking water or sewer systems to serve that development.

I was extremely alarmed to learn that the current LMI act allows a density bonus up to 8 housing units per acre in areas that support drinking water and **within the Scituate Reservoir watershed**. That's an increase from one house in a two-acre zone to 17 houses or a 1700% increase in density! If a development had 25 two acre lots the density skyrockets from 25 houses to 425! That doesn't include the potential for each lot to also have an accessory dwelling unit or the units to be duplexes. That's an extremely excessive density bonus.

I support the need for more low and moderate income housing in RI. However, housing must be developed in a responsible way that doesn't pollute drinking water resources or overextend limited ground water drinking supplies. RI must have clean, safe and sustainable drinking water supplies to support existing development, and to encourage future growth and economic development. The future prosperity of Rhode Island depends on it. I strongly urge the committee to adopt this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Sincerely,

Robert K. Bower

Chair – Scituate Land Trust and Member – Scituate Conservation Commission

Cc: President of the Senate Valarie J. Lawson

Senate Majority Leader Frank A. Ciccone III

Senator Gordon Rodgers