



April 4, 2024

The Honorable David Bennett
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: In support for H8071, *An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Hazardous Waste Management*

Dear Chair Bennett, First Vice Chair Phillips, Second Vice Chair Carson, and Distinguished Committee Members:

Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Corporation (“RIHousing”) is pleased to submit testimony in support of House bill 8071, *An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Hazardous Waste Management*, introduced by Representative Terri Cortvriend. This bill would increase the threshold to require remediation of naturally occurring arsenic in soil to less than or equal to 20 milligrams per kilogram.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element found in water, air, and soil. Levels of naturally occurring arsenic vary by locality. Rhode Island, Aquidneck Island in particular, has higher levels of naturally occurring arsenic in soil. The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) currently uses a tiered system triggering different remedial requirements at 7 parts per million (ppm), 15 ppm, and 43 ppm. Due to the high levels of naturally occurring arsenic, it is not uncommon for development projects on Aquidneck Island in particular, but other parts of the state as well to trigger arsenic remediation requirements. This remediation may involve removing soil from the site or encapsulating the soil and can lead to significantly higher development costs for some projects. DEM has noted that the current standards were established based on the levels of naturally occurring arsenic in soil in Rhode Island and not on the risk to human health.

In both Massachusetts and Connecticut, the threshold for remediation of arsenic in the soil is 20 milligrams per kilogram. RIHousing supports this legislation which would bring RI’s arsenic remediation threshold in-line with our neighboring states. This legislation will lower development costs for impacted affordable and market rate developments without jeopardizing public health. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Ventura". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carol" and last name "Ventura" clearly distinguishable.

Carol Ventura
Executive Director