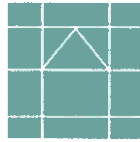


H O U S I N G



N E T W O R K

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Re: In Support of H-5076, Article 5, Sections 4, 7, and 10

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing today to express strong support for the provisions in Governor McKee's FY26 proposed budget establishing a dedicated source of funding for the Housing Resources and Homelessness fund through the application of a 5% tax to whole-home short-term rentals (Article 5, Sections 4 and 7), and an increase to the real estate conveyance tax on high-value homes (Section 10).

The Housing Network of Rhode Island, our membership of nonprofit affordable housing developers, and our partners in Homes RI are committed to addressing the housing needs of low-income Rhode Islanders. With grave uncertainty about the continuity of federal funding and the wind-down of pandemic relief funds, it is more important than ever that we pursue sustainable funding mechanisms at the state level that support long-term housing solutions and services for our most vulnerable community members. The two proposed tax measures are reasonable, fair, effective, and proven strategies to do this, helping to balance the economic benefits of real estate and short-term rentals with the broader public interest and ongoing essential investments in housing and homelessness.

There are limited sources of funding for housing and homelessness initiatives proposed in this year's budget, and these additional revenue streams are critical to bolster prior investments and support existing programs and services. We appreciate the commitment of state leadership towards addressing the housing needs of Rhode Islanders, and support for these tax measures is a demonstration of that commitment. I strongly urge the Committee to support these budget articles. Thank you for your consideration, and I am always happy to answer questions. Please feel free to contact me at (401) 721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melina Lodge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melina Lodge, Executive Director