



March 12, 2024

The Honorable Stephen Casey
Chair, House Housing and Municipal Government Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: In support for H.7534, *An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – City Housing Authorities*

Dear Chair Casey, First Vice Chair Fogarty, Second Vice Chair Speakman, and Distinguished Committee Members:

On behalf of Ferland Corporation, I write in support of House bill 7534, *An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – City Housing Authorities*, introduced by Representative Cruz.

Ferland Corporation owns and manages 2,572 apartment units in the State of Rhode Island. Of the 2,572 apartment units, 1,581 units (+61%) are dedicated to affordable housing.

House bill 7534 would clarify that Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (RIHousing) is the only Public Housing Agency (PHA) authorized to administer Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Project Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) contracts in Rhode Island.

RIHousing has administered the PBRA contracts on behalf of HUD for over 20 years. As the statewide PHA in Rhode Island, RIHousing is best positioned to administer the PBRA contracts effectively. Their staff has in-depth knowledge of the developments and has built extensive relationships with property managers. RIHousing's understanding of the developments has also facilitated the long-term preservation of these units as affordable housing, which is especially important during the serious affordable housing shortage facing the state. Having RIHousing serving in this role also allows local owners to be connected to the resources they need to rehabilitate the developments and preserve their affordability for the long-term.

This bill would ensure that RIHousing can continue to administer the PBRA contracts in the state. The bill would not change any other aspect of the role that RIHousing has played with respect to these developments.

This is an important bill and we urge your support for it. If you have any questions, please contact me at 401-728-4000, ext 308 or jpalamo@ferlandmgt.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason R. Palermo".

Jason R. Palermo
Vice President of Property Management
Ferland Corporation