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March 11, 2024

House Chairman Representative Stephen Casey and members
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

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

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

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, also known as Section 8 multifamily contracts, in Rhode Island.

Public Housing Authorities are effective at meeting the needs of their residents because we are based in the community, we know our properties and residents and can respond quickly to problems should they arise. Similarly, RIHousing has administered the PBRA contracts on behalf of HUD for over 20 years. As the statewide PHA for Rhode Island, RIHousing is best positioned to administer the PBRA contracts effectively and respond to tenant concerns promptly. Their relationship and knowledge 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.

HUD has made several attempts to rebid these contracts to allow out-of-state entities to oversee these developments. This bill would ensure that RIHousing can continue to administer the Section 8 multifamily contracts in the state. The bill would not change any other aspect of the role that RIHousing has played with respect to these developments and nor would it impact the role that other PHAs play in the state. The Rhode Islanders we serve are best supported by these contracts being administered by a Rhode Island PHA familiar with the developments and tenants and not an out of state entity.

This is an important bill, and we urge your support for it. If you have any questions, please contact me at (401) 721-6010 or pmcfarland@pawthousing.org

Sincerely,

Paula McFarland
Executive Director
Pawtucket Housing Authority

Paula McFarland, Executive Director	Mary E. Bray Chairperson	Olga Torres, Vice Chairperson
Elaine Cruz, Commissioner	George L. Kelley, III Commissioner	Kevin Rabbitt, Commissioner
Robert Ricci, Commissioner	Beth Roberge, Commissioner	