



June 10, 2024

The Honorable Steven Casey
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St
Providence RI, 02903

RE: House Bill Number: H8336 AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSING

Dear Chairman Casey and Honorable Members of the Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

I am writing to express our support for House Bill 8336, which proposes to amend the definition of "low- and moderate-income housing" to include housing secured by a federal government voucher or subsidy, applicable only if the voucher or subsidy is applied prospectively. This bill is a crucial step towards addressing the housing crisis our state is currently facing.

As you are well aware, the availability of affordable housing is a pressing issue in many of our cities and towns. House Bill 8336 recognizes the importance of federal government rental assistance vouchers and includes them as part of the low- and moderate-income housing definition. Specifically, this bill ensures that:

- Low- or moderate-income housing includes rental properties within a municipality secured with a federal government rental assistance voucher.
- (ii) Any housing unit that qualifies as low- or moderate-income housing under this subsection and under § 42-128-8.1 will count as one whole unit towards the municipality's requirement for such housing. Moreover, a rental property secured with a federal government rental assistance voucher effective from July 1, 2024, which does not meet other qualifying requirements, will count as one-half of one unit. This is contingent upon the municipality confirming with the issuing authority that the voucher is in good standing and active.

This thoughtful approach will significantly benefit both the residents in need of affordable housing and the municipalities striving to meet their housing requirements. By including rental properties with federal government vouchers, House Bill 8336 provides a practical and flexible solution that acknowledges the diverse forms of housing assistance available to low- and moderate-income families.

The inclusion of these units in the housing count, even at a fractional rate, encourages the utilization of federal rental assistance programs and supports our collective goal of increasing access to affordable housing. This legislative change will help bridge the gap for many families who rely on vouchers to secure stable housing and will enable cities and towns to better meet their housing obligations.

On behalf of the League of Cities and Towns thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express our views.

Sincerely,

David M. Bodah
Associate Director

Cc: Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Ernie Almonte, Executive Director, RILCT