TOWN OF BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

STEVEN CONTENTE
Town Administrator

Representative Stephen M. Casey
Chairman
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee

March 26, 2024

Dear Honorable Representative Casey:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Town of Bristol, asking you to oppose the enactment of Bill H-7981 relating to Towns and Cities – Zoning Ordinances that would, if enacted, alter the character of the Bristol, and other communities, by allowing residential use in zones that are not designed for habitation. The unintended consequence of such zoning use modifications could negatively impact the ability of businesses and manufacturers currenting in approved, designated zones, to conduct their operations should residential use be allowed in close proximity.

Bristol manufacturers have already experienced similar negative impacts in locations where existing commercial operations became the subject of noise and other complaints that are normal occurrences of production and commerce. Residents who moved close to these existing zones voiced opposition to the existing manufacturing operations, causing the companies to look outside of Bristol to conduct their operations.

The Town of Bristol has a strong heritage that consists of manufacturing and relies on its business base to sustain a favorable tax rate and employ residents and non-residents alike. By essentially eliminating zoning restrictions for residential use, this Bill would potentially place an undue negative impact on our existing manufacturers and essentially deter any new large-scale manufacturers from coming to Bristol.

I appreciate the current housing constraints that Rhode Island is facing and we are proactively seeking solutions to this in our community. However, I ask that you reconsider your support of this Bill and allow Towns to continue to develop their communities in a manner that sustains diverse uses and ensures that appropriate zones are designated so as to not impede the high quality of life that we have enjoyed.

Respectfully,

Steven Contente