



April 2, 2025

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

Re: Opposition to House bill 5689

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

Rhode Island and Mortgage Finance Corporation ("RIHousing") respectfully opposes House bill 5689, *An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Low and Moderate Income Housing*.

The primary purpose of the State's Low and Moderate Income Housing Act (R.I. General Laws 45-53) is to provide a streamlined permitting process for proposed developments in which at least 25% of the units meet the definition of low- and moderate-income housing. This allows developments which may be seeking numerous waivers from local zoning requirements to have the proposal reviewed by a single local body on a streamlined schedule.

House bill 5689 would exclude projects of 60 units or more in communities with a population of less than 35,000 from the consolidated comprehensive permit process. The legislation also imposes additional review steps, a higher threshold for the number of board members required to vote for the project and additional required findings for these projects regarding impacts on schools, public transportation and infrastructure.

The Low and Moderate Income Housing Act and its comprehensive permit process are important tools to help Rhode Island address the current serious shortage of affordable housing units. This legislation would erode the effectiveness of the Act by excluding the very projects that could be most impactful at easing the housing shortage. It would also discourage developers from proposing larger projects, thereby likely increasing housing developments costs since larger projects tend to be able to take advantage of economies of scale.

It is important to note that all comprehensive permit projects, like other development proposals, must still meet all state environmental, transportation and building code requirements. We have a clear need to increase housing production in Rhode Island. Making the permitting process harder for developments with more than 60 units will only make it harder to achieve that goal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Ventura".

Carol Ventura  
Executive Director