

H O U S I N G



N E T W O R K

Statement from Melina Lodge, Executive Director of the Housing Network of Rhode Island, on the Appointment of an Interim Housing Secretary

PAWTUCKET, RI – I commend and thank Governor McKee for ensuring minimal disruption to the urgent work of the Department of Housing with his appointment of Daniel Connors as interim Housing Secretary. Stable transitional leadership will be crucial in the months ahead as we continue to work with the State to address Rhode Island’s pressing housing challenges together.

The Housing Secretary holds significant influence in shaping our state’s housing policies and programs. As the Governor contemplates the appointment of a permanent Housing Secretary, the chosen candidate must have a deep understanding of Rhode Island’s unique housing needs and opportunities, while demonstrating the ability to collaborate effectively with our state’s long-standing network of community development corporations, nonprofit housing developers and service provider organizations.

In June 2024, the General Assembly approved the State’s largest investment to date in affordable housing production with the inclusion of a \$120 million Housing Bond in the FY25 budget. With appropriate funding available, Housing Network of Rhode Island members estimate they have the capacity to produce and preserve more than 2,100 affordable homes within the next three years. This investment is a pivotal opportunity to ensure these homes are built and make significant progress in addressing the housing crisis, which the Housing Secretary plays an important role in.

We stand ready to work with the Governor’s Office in making recommendations about the qualifications, skills, and qualities that the permanent Housing Secretary should possess, and remain committed to working closely with the new Housing Secretary to ensure that Rhode Island can move forward with comprehensive, effective and equitable housing solutions.

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