



March 11, 2025

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chair, House Committee on Housing and Municipal Government
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: In opposition of 5691

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI), our member agencies, and the low income Rhode Islanders we seek to serve, I write in opposition of **H5691**, legislation that seeks to require developers of any residential development to submit a comprehensive assessment of the project to each municipality where the project shall be physically located.

During the last four legislative sessions, the unattainable cost of housing and the growing need for more affordable housing in this state has taken center stage. Historically low inventory of homes for sale and for rent coupled with exploding demand for housing have driven housing costs out of reach for many Rhode Islanders, particularly our lowest income households. Decades long reductions in building permit activity, restrictive land use policies, low vacancy rates, the state's chronic underinvestment in affordable housing and inadequate worker wages have all been major contributing factors to the lack of available homes, the high cost of housing, and ultimately, housing unaffordability. In January 2025, the RI Realtors Association reported the median priced single family home was \$441,750 (increase of 4.3% from 1-2024), which to afford, a household would require an annual household income of approximately \$136,000. However, median household income in Rhode Island is approximately \$82,000 annually, far from what is needed to afford a home on the market today. The only way alleviate some of the pressure on the housing market, reduce skyrocketing home prices, and house Rhode Islanders is to build more homes.

As drafted, the elements of the required comprehensive review are extensive in nature and reach, but yet ambiguous as to how the developer would be required to satisfactorily demonstrate these requirements to a municipality. **H5691** effectively proposes to create yet another delay and barrier in the development process. There are already numerous checkpoints within the development process that would highlight the impact a proposed development might have, making the requirements of **H5691** unnecessarily duplicative and onerous.

For this reason, I strongly oppose **H5691** and urge the Committee to hold this bill. I am available to answer any questions you might have and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge, MCP
Executive Director