



March 11, 2025

The Honorable Stephen Casey
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street, Providence RI 02903

Re: Support for House Bill 5949

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee:

The mission of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) is to increase the supply of safe, healthy, and affordable homes in thriving communities. On behalf of HNRI and our membership of 19 nonprofit affordable housing developers, I write in **support of House Bill 5949, *An Act Relating to Towns and Cities – Zoning Ordinance***. The legislation aims to make clear the duty of affirmatively furthering fair housing for all public agencies' activities and programs related to housing and community development. We appreciate Lieutenant Governor Matos for bringing forward this legislation and her commitment to fair housing practices.

While we wholly support the underpinning value of affirmatively furthering fair housing, we believe the legislation could be strengthened with the following additions or clarifications:

- Greater detail about the types of meaningful actions that are considered to affirmatively further fair housing;
- The applicability of this standard and its alignment to existing federal requirements;
- How public agencies' and activities related to housing and community development, and zoning codes will be measured and enforced for compliance with the established standard of affirmatively furthering fair housing.

I am happy to support this legislation and thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill. As always, I am happy to answer any questions and can be reached at 401-721-5680 ext. 104 or mlodge@housingnetworkri.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge, Executive Director