

JOINT MUNICIPAL STATEMENT

Rhode Island Municipalities on the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws

We, the undersigned Rhode Island municipalities, recognize the urgent and legitimate need to expand access to affordable housing throughout the State of Rhode Island. We share a commitment to solutions that are equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the diverse housing needs of our residents.

At the same time, we affirm that Rhode Island municipalities are constitutionally and statutorily vested with **home rule authority** over local land use, zoning, and comprehensive planning, as set forth in **Article XIII of the Rhode Island Constitution** and the Rhode Island General Laws governing municipal planning and zoning.

Rhode Island's cities and towns vary significantly in geography, infrastructure capacity, environmental constraints, fiscal resources, and existing housing stock. Accordingly, a **uniform, one-size-fits-all approach** to affordable housing policy risks producing unintended and inequitable outcomes that may conflict with locally adopted comprehensive plans, strain municipal infrastructure, and undermine long-established planning processes.

We are collectively concerned that aspects of the **2025 State Affordable Housing Laws**, as currently written or applied, may impair municipal home rule authority and disrupt the balance between statewide housing goals and local governance. These concerns warrant careful review, legal clarity, and constructive intergovernmental dialogue.

Therefore, we jointly state the following:

1. **We affirm municipal home rule authority** over land use, zoning, and planning, and assert that state housing mandates must be implemented in a manner consistent with constitutional and statutory protections of local governance.
2. **We call for collaboration among Rhode Island municipalities** to evaluate the impacts of the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws and to share legal, planning, and policy analysis.
3. **We support coordinated municipal efforts to seek clarification or judicial review**, including joint or class-based legal action where appropriate, to resolve questions regarding the scope, interpretation, and lawful application of the law.

4. **We urge state leaders and agencies to engage directly with municipalities** to amend, interpret, or implement the law in a manner that allows flexibility based on local conditions, infrastructure capacity, environmental considerations, and community planning goals.
5. **We support responsible, lawful administration of local land-use review processes** during this period of uncertainty, including careful scrutiny of applications submitted pursuant to the 2025 State Affordable Housing Law, consistent with existing statutes and upon advice of municipal legal counsel.

Signature Page

Joint Municipal Statement of Rhode Island Municipalities Regarding the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws

By signing below, the undersigned municipality affirms its support for the principles and positions set forth in the *Joint Municipal Statement of Rhode Island Municipalities Regarding the 2025 State Affordable Housing Laws*, as approved in accordance with local municipal procedures.

This signature signifies endorsement of the Statement's shared concerns and call for collaboration and does not constitute independent legal action by the undersigned municipality.

Municipality Information

Municipality Name: Portsmouth

Governing Body (check one):

☒ Town Council ☐ City Council ☐ Other: _____

Date of Local Authorization (if applicable): 1-27-2026

Authorized Signatory

Name (Print): Keith Hamilton

Title:

☒ Council President
☐ Mayor
☐ Town/City Manager
☐ Other Authorized Official: _____

Signature: Keith Hamilton

Date: 1-29-2026

Attestation

Town/City Clerk Name (Print): Jennifer M. West, CMC

Clerk Signature: Jennifer M. West

Date: 1/29/2020

Contact Information (for coordination purposes)

Primary Contact Name: Jennifer M. West, CMC

Title/Department: Town Clerk

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