



# TOWN OF EXETER, RI

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**TOWN COUNCIL**

Diane Bampton Allen, President  
Raymond A. Morrissey, Jr., Vice President  
Calvin A. Ellis  
Jamie S. Schiffer  
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**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
TOWN OF EXETER**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-12**

**IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL H-7446 AND SENATE BILL S-2691  
RELATING TO LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSING –  
PROTECTION OF DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES**

**WHEREAS:** The State of Rhode Island has established a goal that each city and town provide at least ten percent (10%) of its housing stock as low- and moderate-income (hereinafter “LMI”) housing, and the Town of Exeter supports the need for more low- and moderate-income housing in Rhode Island; and

**WHEREAS:** The Rhode Island LMI Housing Act (RIGL 45-53) currently allows density bonuses for qualifying affordable housing developments that can increase residential density over the underlying local zoning; and

**WHEREAS:** In Exeter, all homes depend on private wells and individual onsite wastewater treatment systems, with no access to public water or sewer; and

**WHEREAS:** Exeter’s zoning has been carefully designed to protect the quality and quantity of drinking water, with three-acre zoning districts sited over aquifers and two-acre zoning districts covering recharge areas, in order to maintain sufficient upland area to filter contaminants before they reach the groundwater; and

**WHEREAS:** The current LMI Housing Act density bonuses are wholly incompatible with areas that depend on groundwater for both drinking water and wastewater treatment, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management’s Onsite Wastewater Treatment System rules address individual system compliance but do not adequately address the cumulative, long-term impacts of high-density development on groundwater quality; and

**WHEREAS:** Once drinking water supplies are contaminated or overdrawn, they cannot easily be restored, and such harm would be irreversible for current and future generations of Charlestown residents; and

**WHEREAS:** The State mandated housing densities are excessive and inappropriate in areas not served by public water or sewer, where there is no assurance that onsite wells would have adequate capacity to provide drinking water to the dramatically increased number of dwelling units; and

**WHEREAS:** House Bill H-7446, introduced by Representative Megan Cotter, and companion Senate Bill S-2691, introduced by Victoria Gu, would amend the LMI Housing Act to eliminate state-mandated housing densities in lands used for drinking water supplies, and would further require documentation of the capacity of public water or sewer systems to support any proposed increase in residential density before a development proposal may be approved; and

**WHEREAS:** House Bill H-7446 and Senate Bill S-2691 represent common-sense, responsible amendments that accommodate LMI housing development while protecting the quality and quantity of Rhode Island's drinking water supplies; and

**WHEREAS:** It has been long-standing State policy to protect all drinking water supplies to support existing and future needs for growth and economic development, and the State can and must encourage responsible housing development that avoids creating future crises in water availability or quality.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Exeter Town Council hereby expresses its strong support for House Bill H-7446 and Senate Bill S-2691, currently pending before the Rhode Island General Assembly; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Exeter Town Council urges the members of the Rhode Island Senate and House of Representatives to enact House Bill H-7446 and Senate Bill S-2691 into law; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk is authorized and directed to transmit copies of this Resolution to the Governor of the State of Rhode Island, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Town's state legislative delegation, and the Rhode Island General Assembly.

Approved by vote of the Exeter Town Council on this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.



*Diane Bampton Allen*  
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**Diane Bampton Allen**  
Town Council President

*Raymond A. Morrissey, Jr.*  
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**Raymond A. Morrissey, Jr.**  
Town Council Vice President

*Jamie S. Schiffer*  
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**Jamie S. Schiffer**  
Town Council Member

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Joseph M. Turner  
Town Council Member

*Handwritten signature*

Calvin A. Ellis  
Town Council Member

IN WITNESS HEREOF, I hereby set my hand and the Official Seal of the Town of Exeter this 4<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2026.



*Handwritten signature*

Lynn M. Hawkins, CMC  
Exeter Town Clerk