



50 Milk Street, 16th Floor
Boston, MA 02109

Massachusetts is For Everyone

May 15, 2024

The Honorable Ronald Mariano
Speaker, Massachusetts House of Representatives
State House, Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Accessory Dwelling Units

Dear Speaker Mariano and Chairman Michlewitz:

We, the undersigned organizations, write to you today to voice our strong support for legalizing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by-right statewide this legislative session, as part of the Affordable Homes Act.

For decades, municipalities across our state have severely limited the types of homes that Massachusetts residents can build and live in. As a result, we have a severe housing shortage that has pushed home prices to record highs for renters and home-buyers alike. This lowers our standard of living, pushes more families towards housing insecurity, and threatens the future prosperity of our state.

Legalizing ADUs is a sensible solution towards addressing these challenges. To begin with, due to their small size and adaptability ADUs fit neatly into many different types of homes and neighborhoods. They give homeowners in those neighborhoods access to a new source of income, which can be especially beneficial for low-income homeowners and those on a fixed income. They also provide affordable living arrangements for people at various stages of life. In particular, ADUs are often lived in by seniors who want to downsize, while still remaining in their communities, young people who want to live in the neighborhoods where they grew up, and individuals with disabilities who desire independent and accessible living.

Allowing ADUs in more communities has benefits beyond housing. By unlocking this underutilized housing type and creating minimum statewide standards, local builders, contractors, and entrepreneurs will be able to scale up their businesses and start new ones. Lastly, ADUs help us preserve our natural landscapes and have a low environmental impact.

While critics of statewide legalization argue that ADUs should continue to be solely regulated by individual municipalities, we must look around and acknowledge that this status-quo approach does not work. Conversely, states that have taken a combined state and local approach with consistent by-right standards have seen a steady growth of new affordable housing options in their communities. In a recent report on ADUs, the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies cited consistent and



comprehensive statewide standards as the most important factor for producing meaningful increases in the construction of new ADUs.

The cost of inaction on the housing crisis is clear; growing numbers of young people will leave Massachusetts for more affordable states, more families will be put in danger of housing loss, and economic growth will be stifled as businesses struggle to attract, pay and retain workers.

Legalizing ADUs is a common-sense and cost-effective solution that must be part of the state's strategy to combat the housing crisis. We respectfully urge you to ensure that ADUs are legalized statewide this legislative session.

Sincerely,



Jesse Kanson-Benanav
Executive Director
Abundant Housing Massachusetts

Michael E. Festa, State Director
AARP Massachusetts

Brooke Thomson
CEO
Associated Industries of Massachusetts

Leo Sarkissian
Executive Director
The Arc of Massachusetts

Brad Gordon
Executive Director
Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority

Nicole Obi
Executive Director
Black Economic Council of Massachusetts

Rachel Heller
Chief Executive Officer
Citizens' Housing & Planning Association

Linda Dunlavy
Executive Director
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

James E. Rooney
President & CEO
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Joe Landers
State Executive Officer
Homebuilders & Remodelers Association of
Massachusetts

Josh Zakim
Executive Director
Housing Forward-MA

Symone Crawford
Executive Director
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance

Emily Haber
President & CEO
Massachusetts Association of Community
Development Corporations

Theresa Hatton
CEO
Massachusetts Association of Realtors

Jeff Walker, AICP
Co-Chair
Massachusetts Association of Regional
Planning Agencies

JD Chesloff
Executive Director
Massachusetts Business Roundtable

James Fuccione
Executive Director
Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative

Clark Ziegler
Executive Director
Massachusetts Housing Partnership

Lizzi Weyant
Deputy Executive Director
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Tamara Small
CEO
NAIOP Massachusetts

Andrea Freeman
Policy Director
Public Health Institute of Western
Massachusetts

Yoni Slater
Religious Action Center of Massachusetts

Keith Fairey
President & CEO
Way Finders

Keith Fairey
Western MA Housing Coalition