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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND COMMERCE  
CORPORATION -- HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Introduced By: Senators Gu, Burke, Kallman, Bissaillon, and Tikoian

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 42-64 of the General Laws entitled "Rhode Island Commerce  
2 Corporation" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **42-64-13.3. Rhode Island housing champion designation.**

4 (a) The commerce corporation shall develop a Rhode Island housing champion designation  
5 program for all qualifying municipalities. The Rhode Island housing champion designation  
6 program shall be voluntary. Each municipality shall have the option, in its sole discretion, to apply  
7 to the commerce corporation to receive the Rhode Island housing champion designation. In  
8 exchange for obtaining the Rhode Island housing champion designation, a municipality shall  
9 receive preferential access to state resources including, but not limited to, discretionary state  
10 infrastructure funds, as available.

11 (b) The corporation shall adopt rules to establish qualifications and procedures for a  
12 municipality to receive the Rhode Island housing champion designation. The designation procedure  
13 shall be based on a scoring system.

14 (c) Qualifications to receive the Rhode Island housing champion designation shall include:

15 (1) Adoption of such land use regulations and ordinances which the corporation determines  
16 to be necessary to promote the development of workforce housing, and other types of housing  
17 necessary for the economic development of the state. In this subsection, "land use regulations and  
18 ordinances" may include, but are not limited to, zoning ordinances to innovative land use controls,

1 subdivision and the site plan regulations.

2 (2) Training of planning and zoning board members using, training materials and programs,  
3 provided by the department that cover the processes, procedures, regulations, and statutes related  
4 to the board on which the member serves; approved by the corporation.

5 (3) Implementation of sewer and water infrastructure improvements intended to support  
6 the development of workforce housing, and other types of housing necessary for the economic  
7 development of the state.

8 (4) Implementation of public transportation, sidewalks, or other walkability infrastructure  
9 intended to support the development of workforce housing, and other types of housing necessary  
10 for the economic development of the state.

11 (d) Qualifications to receive the Rhode Island housing champion designation may also  
12 include, but are not limited to adoption of financial tools that incentivize the development of  
13 workforce housing, including adoption of the community revitalization tax relief incentive program  
14 and establishment of municipal economic development and revitalization districts.

15 (e) Municipalities that receive a Rhode Island housing champion designation, shall  
16 annually report in a form required by the department. The annual report shall include such measures  
17 as the corporation may determine including, but not limited to, land use board applications,  
18 approvals and building permits.

19 (f) A Rhode Island housing champion designation shall be valid for three (3) years from  
20 the date such designation is awarded. A municipality may seek renewal of its Rhode Island housing  
21 champion designation for subsequent three (3) year periods. The corporation shall include in the  
22 criteria for renewal performance metrics including, but not limited to, the qualifications listed in  
23 subsection § 42-64-13.3 (c).

24 (g) Each year the corporation shall develop a report which describes all actions taken  
25 related to the operation of the Rhode Island housing champion designation program in the  
26 preceding state fiscal year and assesses the overall impact of the Rhode Island housing champion  
27 designation program, including an assessment of the additional housing units produced in the state  
28 as a result of the program's operation and incentives. The report required by this section shall be  
29 submitted to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the president of the  
30 senate on or before November 1 of each year, beginning in 2026, and upon such submission, the  
31 report shall be posted online on the website of the department.

32 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND COMMERCE  
CORPORATION -- HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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1           This act would authorize the establishment of a Rhode Island housing champion  
2 designation program. This program would make qualified municipalities eligible to receive  
3 preferential access to state resources, including discretionary state infrastructure funds, as available.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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