



Municipalities and Real Estate Coalition Join Together in Support of Housing Production Bill *An Act to promote housing choices (H.4290)*

June 21, 2018

The Greater Boston Real Estate Board, the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Realtors, NAIOP—The Commercial Real Estate Development Association, and the Massachusetts Municipal Association, join together to express our strong support for H. 4290, *An Act to promote housing choices*. In its current form, this important bill is a unique opportunity to increase the much-needed supply of housing in Massachusetts.

As reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Housing, H. 4290 represents an unprecedented consensus by the major stakeholders to advance housing development policy forward. This narrowly tailored bill advances the state's need for housing while respecting the important role municipalities play in regulating new housing production. It does so by eliminating one barrier to housing production—the need for a supermajority vote of Town Meeting or a city council to approve zoning changes for housing and smart growth planning.

To encourage cities and towns to adopt zoning that supports sustainable housing production, the Department of Housing and Community Development created the *Housing Choice Initiative*. That program rewards communities that produce new housing and adopt best practices to promote smart growth with grants and technical assistance. Passage of H. 4290 will make it easier for communities to achieve Housing Choice designation.

Unlike another legislative proposal now before House Committee on Ways & Means (H. 4397), which would rewrite the Zoning Act in ways that are complicated, controversial, and would hinder the production of housing, H. 4290 contains no mandates or other provisions that are opposed by all of our organizations.

According to the UMass Donahue Institute, “the challenge for Massachusetts going forward will be to address the housing, transportation, and infrastructure constraints that make it more difficult for the workers who will be needed to fill these positions to relocate to the state and meet the needs of growing employers. While this challenge is not new, the price of inaction is high and rising.” Massachusetts is one of the most expensive states in the country in terms of housing affordability. It is critical that we do not complicate or increase housing costs by enacting legislation that would further worsen the existing problem.

Together with the recently enacted Housing Bond Bill, H. 4290 can make a significant impact on the Commonwealth's historic shortage of housing. We respectfully urge your support for its passage before the end of the formal session.