The Housing Network of Rhode Island wishes to express its appreciation for the leadership of Governor McKee, Speaker Shekarchi, Senate President Ruggerio, and the members of the General Assembly, in taking action to address our state's decades-old housing crisis. As more and more Rhode Islander's face rising housing costs and insecurity, the need to increase our housing inventory, reduce barriers and expand opportunities for development is imperative. Thursday's passage of the FY23 State Budget marks a historic level of investment in housing by which Rhode Island's leaders have sent a clear signal of commitment to addressing the need for more affordable homes and programs for people experiencing housing cost burden and insecurity across our state. Thank you!

The Housing Network of Rhode Island and its member organizations are rooted in the belief that every Rhode Islander should have access to a safe, decent home that is affordable to them in the community of their choice. Stable housing is the essential foundation on which families, neighborhoods, communities and Rhode Island as a whole, thrive.

The level of funding provided for housing in the FY23 State Budget is unprecedented, including $221 million in funds allocated, in addition to $29 million approved in the RI Rebounds Act which passed in January 2022. State leaders faced many crucial decisions in formulating this budget, and we thank the General Assembly for keeping a strong emphasis on housing investments to support Rhode Islander’s recovery from the pandemic while they face increased financial challenges to making ends meet, especially among our lowest income households. Among the initiatives included in this funding is $85 million for the construction of new homes, $30 million for down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, and $35 million to develop housing solutions for our most vulnerable neighbors experiencing homelessness. The budget also provides $28 million to recapitalize the Historic Tax Credit Fund. These investments provide critical financial resources to help build and preserve more low and moderate-income homes statewide, respond to and prevent homelessness, and expand homeownership opportunities.

We are grateful to Speaker Shekarchi for making housing his top priority, and applaud the members of the General Assembly for passage of several key pieces of complementary legislation this session in addition to making this significant investment in housing. The
elevation of the Deputy Secretary to a cabinet level position within the Administration will provide much needed coordination to ensure that the State is able to lead a proactive housing production strategy. Additionally, legislation was passed that will reduce barriers and streamline processes to increase development activity, expand access to a greater diversity of housing options, and collect useful data to drive thoughtful and responsive policy making in the future.

The budget and aligned legislation are integral steps in addressing our housing crisis head on, and provides a solid foundation to build upon in coming years. Yet we know that this work requires a sustained commitment from leaders at all levels of government to ensure housing issues remain a key policy priority. We urge the State of Rhode Island to remain laser-focused on creation and preservation of safe and healthy homes through the continuation of innovative policymaking and substantive, impactful investments in the years to come so that every Rhode Islander can have a place to call home.

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**About the Housing Network of Rhode Island**

The Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) is the state association of Community Development Corporations and non-profit housing developers. HNRI exists to support the work of our members by promoting public awareness and policies that address Rhode Island’s housing and community economic needs. Our members have built and developed thousands of affordable housing units and initiated numerous revitalization efforts in neighborhoods and communities across Rhode Island.