



Testimony in Support of An Act Promoting Housing and Sustainable Development (S.81)

David A. Bryant
Director of Advocacy
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations
to the
Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Businesses
Massachusetts General Court
September 28, 2017

Chairman Coppinger, Chairman Cyr, and members of the Joint Committee, on behalf of MACDC and our members, I am testifying in support of An Act Promoting Housing and Sustainable Development (S.81), legislation presented by Sen. Harriette Chandler to overhaul our state's dated and confusing planning and zoning laws and to provide additional tools to help the Commonwealth meet its housing needs.

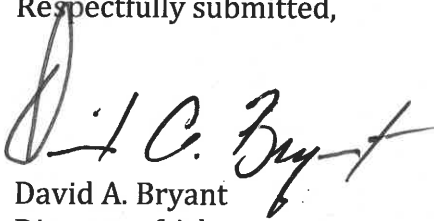
MACDC represents all 60 state-certified CDCs in Massachusetts as well as 30 other nonprofit organizations that share our mission of expanding economic opportunity across the Commonwealth. CDCs work collaboratively with residents and local governments to identify community goals and develop projects with strong local support. In 2016 alone, our members served 81,219 families with housing, jobs and other educational, counseling, technical assistance and housing-related services. CDCs built or preserved 1,643 homes and provided 1,438 jobs to local workers in real estate construction projects, representing 34 projects and a \$186.6 million investment. It is widely recognized that the Greater Boston region needs a dramatic increase in housing production to meet the existing and growing demand for housing, especially rental housing. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and other experts suggest the region needs 435,000 new housing units, mostly multifamily, by 2040. While many MACDC members have a pipeline of projects in Greater Boston, moving these projects forward takes a very long time and is very expensive, especially for smaller nonprofit developers. Housing development in suburban communities is particularly challenging for many reasons, including the high cost of development, restrictive local zoning ordinances, opposition to and delays in reviewing projects, and moratoriums on multifamily housing. The bill's requirement that every community must have at least one multifamily district "of reasonable size" should provide for a reasonable opportunity to build multifamily housing developments, enabling MACDC members to help low- and moderate-income families obtain access to more housing opportunities and to advance the Commonwealth's fair housing goals.

Our members understand the challenges presented by our local zoning laws, and we believe this legislation will allow us to do more of these projects with greater efficiency. CDCs are committed to accelerating the development of homes that people with low, moderate, and middle incomes can afford, especially in suburban communities in Greater Boston. CDCs will benefit from the additional and expanded definitions and

authorizations for many useful zoning techniques, including cluster development, inclusionary zoning, and variance provisions that will facilitate more community-scale residential projects as well as a consolidated permitting process that will benefit larger, more complex projects. We are pleased that the bill includes innovative and creative smart-growth provisions, which offer communities that voluntarily "opt-in" a predictable and by right housing and commercial development opportunity in smart growth locations, as well as financial incentives and regulatory resources to manage future growth and development sustainably.

MACDC members appreciate the leadership of Senator Chandler and Representatives Kulik and Peake, longtime champions for comprehensive zoning reform, as well as the support from the many legislators and community partners who support "Great Neighborhoods." We urge the committee to report favorably S.81, so that all communities may benefit from this finely balanced approach to zoning more effectively that will meet our Commonwealth's housing demands now and for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,



David A. Bryant
Director of Advocacy
Massachusetts Association of
Community Development Corporations
15 Court Square, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02108

(617)379-5927
davidb@macdc.org