



Town of Wrentham
Select Board

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February 27, 2024

Senator Rebecca L. Rausch
State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 215
Boston MA, 02133

RE: MBTA Communities Law

Honorable Senator Rebecca Rausch,

On behalf of the Town of Wrentham, the Wrentham Select Board is requesting your support and guidance with the MBTA Housing Bill requirements. The town is well aware of the housing shortage and is doing its part to meet the needs of our residents, their families and all who would like to call Wrentham home.

You have witnessed first-hand while joining us as we have celebrated holidays, our history, events, remembering all the sacrifices made to protect our freedoms. The residents are passionate about our town, a diverse community with people of differing backgrounds of heritage, faith and economic status. Our residents were drawn to this town for its small-town character. We are a town of open space, many farms, walking and hiking trails, beaches, and great recreation areas to help promote healthy living and a great quality of life.

Our citizens are not objecting to increasing our housing supply. The town, with the help of Massachusetts Area Planning Council (MAPC) and many other state organizations, have made it clear for the need for more housing and affordable housing. The MBTA Housing Bill requires us to increase our population by as much as 13% without any state funding. This would cause the largest one-time increase in population in our town's history. For us to commit to the 15 units per acre requirement would overload our infrastructure, police, fire, and schools. Wrentham, along with its elected officials, town leaders and residents, are willing to work to create smart growth, while addressing the needs of our longtime residents and generations to come. Wrentham, unlike most communities, lacks municipal sewage and is challenged with inadequate supply of water. The community is working to resolve this issue and hopes to fulfil the immediate need and needs for smart growth.

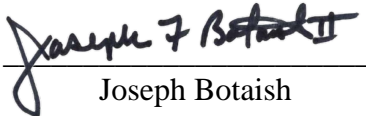
Wrentham has identified the housing shortage within our community. We recognize a shortage of affordable housing for our seniors and first-time home buyers. We have many seniors looking for a place to live that reduces their home care maintenance, groundskeeping, real estate taxes and much more. They love the community they've called home and raised their families in. If we can find affordable options for these buyers, it would open the market to bring in young families and young adults who cherished their upbringing in this great town of Wrentham.

Wrentham is currently in the process of addressing many of those needs. To address the inadequate amount of available housing, we are working with a development group who is proposing to add a mixed-use community to the heart of our downtown. Our zoning meets the needs of Wrentham with a workable density supported by our infrastructure, which will likely put a strain on service, but not to the degree of the MBTA Housing requirement. The development plan created by Wrentham addresses the key points from our Master Plan, which we have worked diligently on over the past four years by listening to the residents, the town's department heads and elected officials to smartly address the community's desires. Wrentham has a plan and is doing its part, but the MBTA Housing Requirement ignores this effort and dictates changes that do not align with the goals of our citizens and will lead to the destruction of the small-town New England charm we've come to love. We are no different than the quaint towns of Cape Cod, or tranquil seaports of Gloucester, Rockport or Manchester by the Sea, nor the wealthier communities of Dover and Sherborn.

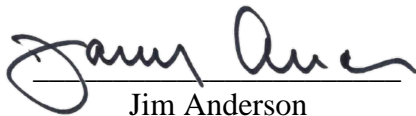
We request your support as our State Senator to assist us in getting a waiver or modifications to the MBTA Housing requirements. Wrentham is doing its part to address housing, but for us to create rental units at a density of 15 units per acre ignores this work and will place an unfunded mandate on our town and an undue hardship to current infrastructure.

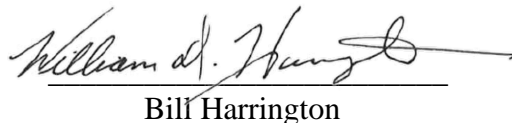
In closing, we hope we have your full support and assistance as we grow and maintain the quaint charm and the loving community you have complimented us on.

Warmest Regards,
Wrentham Select Board


Joseph Botaish


Chris Gallo


Jim Anderson


Bill Harrington


Michelle Rouse