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MAURA T. HEALEY  
GOVERNOR

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

By Her Excellency  
MAURA T. HEALEY  
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 651

FACILITATING SAFE AND AFFORDABLE SINGLE-STAIR  
MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

WHEREAS, Massachusetts faces an urgent need to expand the supply of housing to address affordability challenges, support economic growth, and ensure access to safe and stable homes for people and families across the state;

WHEREAS, building types that enable efficient use of land and support feasible mid-rise residential development—including single-stair construction under appropriate conditions—can play a critical role in increasing housing production in areas with existing infrastructure and services, as recommended by the Unlocking Housing Production Commission;

WHEREAS, Massachusetts is committed to incorporating advances in fire prevention and life-safety systems and ensuring that building code requirements are grounded in rigorous technical analysis to maximize public safety;

WHEREAS, single-stair multifamily residential buildings of moderate height are widely permitted in other states and internationally, subject to specific design, fire-safety, and operational safeguards;

WHEREAS, current Massachusetts building code requirements generally require two means of egress for multifamily residential buildings above three stories, limiting the feasibility of mid-size residential construction across the state;

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to convene relevant technical experts and stakeholders to evaluate, based on evidence and best practices, the conditions under which single-stair multifamily residential buildings may be safely permitted in Massachusetts, and to recommend any necessary regulatory updates;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Maura T. Healey, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution, Part II, c. 2, § I, Art. I, do hereby order as follows:

### **Section 1. Establishment of the Technical Advisory Group on Single-Stair Multifamily Residential Buildings**

There is hereby established, within the Office of the Governor, a Technical Advisory Group on Single-Stair Multifamily Residential Buildings (the "Technical Advisory Group").

The purpose of the Technical Advisory Group shall be to study, and advise the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, on the conditions under which single-stair multifamily residential buildings should be permitted in Massachusetts, subject to appropriate safeguards to adequately address health and safety concerns.

The Technical Advisory Group shall specifically:

1. Conduct a comparative technical analysis of the safety performance of single-stair multifamily residential buildings relative to buildings with two or more means of egress, drawing on empirical data, peer-reviewed research, and applicable standards;
2. Recommend updates to the Massachusetts State Building Code (780 CMR) that would permit the construction of single-stair multifamily residential buildings, with proposed height and unit limits; and
3. Identify and recommend measures to mitigate any health and safety impacts unique to single-stair multifamily residential buildings.

The Technical Advisory Group shall submit a final report reflecting its recommendations to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor not later than 12 months from the effective date of this executive order, unless extended by the Governor.

For purposes of this Executive Order, a "single-stair multifamily residential building" means a multifamily residential building in which the dwelling units are served by one interior exit stairway as the required means of egress for residents.

### **Section 2. Membership of the Technical Advisory Group**

The Technical Advisory Group shall consist of the following members:

- The Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, or their designee, who shall serve as chair;
- The Secretary of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, or their designee;
- The Massachusetts Fire Marshal, or their designee; and
- At least seventeen additional members appointed by the Governor, which members shall include representatives of the following groups:
  - One member representing the Board of Building Regulations and Standards, who shall be an architect or building inspector;
  - One member representing the Massachusetts Federation of Building Officials;
  - One member representing the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts;
  - One member representing the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts;
  - One member representing the American Institute of Architects;
  - One member who is a practicing fire protection or fire safety engineer;
  - One member representing the National Fire Protection Association;
  - One member representing the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA);
  - One member representing the American Planning Association, Massachusetts Chapter;
  - One member representing the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts;
  - One member representing NAIOP Massachusetts;
  - One member representing the Center for Building in North America;
  - One member who is a building official employed by a municipality with a Class 1 Fire Department;
  - One member representing Abundant Housing Massachusetts;
  - One member representing a mid-rise housing developer;
  - One member representing the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations; and
  - One member representing the Joint Center for Housing Studies or a related academic institution.

Members so appointed shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor, in an advisory capacity and without compensation.

### **Section 3. Staffing and Support**

The Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, in consultation with the Office of Public Safety and Inspections, shall provide staff support, coordination, and technical assistance to the Technical Advisory Group. The Technical Advisory Group may consult additional subject-matter experts as necessary to fulfill its charge.

### **Section 4. Compatibility with Existing Laws**

Nothing in this Executive Order shall be construed to require action inconsistent with any applicable state or federal law or to diminish the statutory authority of any executive branch entity.

#### Section 5. Effective Date

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall continue in effect until amended, superseded, or revoked by subsequent Executive Order, or until delivery of the report required by Section 1.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "William Francis Galvin".

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WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN  
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Given in Boston this 12th day of February in the year two thousand and twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America two hundred and fifty.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "M. T. Healey".

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MAURA T. HEALEY  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts