



Housing First
for Hampden, Hampshire,
Franklin and Berkshire Counties

September 11, 2025

Chair James Eldridge
Joint Committee on Revenue
24 Beacon St., Room 511-C
Boston, MA 02133

Chair Adrian Madaro
Joint Committee on Revenue
24 Beacon Street, Room 34
Boston, MA 02133

Re: An Act granting a local option for a real estate transfer fee to fund affordable housing (S.1937/H.3056)

Dear Chairs Eldridge and Madaro and Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Revenue:

I am writing on behalf of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness (“Network”) in support of *An Act granting a local option for a real estate transfer fee to fund affordable housing* (S.1937/H.3056, Senator Jo Comerford, Representative Mike Connolly, Representative Carmen Gentile). This local option bill is a top priority for the Network.

The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness supports collaborative solutions across Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties to prevent and end homelessness through a Housing First approach that centers racial equity. The Network joins over 100 others as a member of the Local Option for Housing Affordability Coalition (LOHA) in support of this bill and is especially grateful to our western Massachusetts Senator Jo Comerford for her lead sponsorship.

In western Massachusetts, a recent report by the [UMass Donahue Institute](#) showed an affordable housing gap of over 23,000 units. Over 50% of western MA residents pay more than 30% of their income in rent. This gap is also lived every day with unprecedented rates of homelessness across the western region. This local option to increase a community’s affordable housing in the region is a vital tool in the toolbox to respond to this extreme housing gap.

This bill’s flexibility is especially vital for the western region, allowing the transfer fee to be utilized for homes over \$1 million or the county median home price, whichever is lower (not to be confused with how high the threshold can be – there is no limit!). Additionally, the bill also allows communities to pool transfer fees across communities into regional affordable housing funds. Both of these options are crucial to make this resource available to our rural sub-regions in Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire counties.

We ask for your favorable report on these bills at the soonest opportunity.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Schwartz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Best,".

Pamela Schwartz, Director

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