July 15, 2021

Speaker of the House, Ronald Mariano: Ronald.Mariano@mahouse.gov
President of the Senate, Karen Spilka: Karen.Spilka@masenate.gov

Joint Committee on Housing:
   Senate Chair John Keenan: John.Keenan@masenate.gov
   Senate Vice-Chair Patricia D. Jehlen: Patricia.Jehlen@masenate.gov
   House Chair James Arciero: James.Arciero@mahouse.gov
   House Vice-Chair John H. Rogers: John.Rogers@mahouse.gov

Joint Committee on Revenue:
   Senate Chair Adam Hinds: Adam.Hinds@masenate.gov
   Senate Vice-Chair Brendan P. Crighton: Brendan.Crighton@masenate.gov
   House Chair Mark J. Cusack: Mark.Cusack@mahouse.gov
   House Vice-Chair David Linsky: David.Linsky@mahouse.gov

Senator Julian Cyr: Julian.Cyr@masenate.gov
Representative Dylan Fernandes: Dylan.Fernandes@mahouse.gov

Dear Honorable Members of the Massachusetts House and Senate:

The Martha’s Vineyard Commission is a regional planning authority, funded by the six Island towns, with broad authority on multiple issues of regional concern, including low- and moderate-income housing. The Commission is acutely aware of the severity of the Martha’s Vineyard housing crisis, its negative impact on our economy and community infrastructure, and the need for reliable long-term funding Island-wide to implement housing solutions. A variety of local initiatives are underway in each of our six Towns, but adequate funding is a major obstacle to creating the much-needed housing in a quantity that would make an impact. A significant funding source, beyond what is currently available to the Towns, is an absolute necessity if the Island is to meaningfully address the low- and moderate-income housing shortage.

By a unanimous vote, the Martha’s Vineyard Commission supports bills introduced in the MA Legislature this session which seek to establish Transfer Fees on real estate transactions over a certain amount to fund affordable, community, and attainable housing:

S868: https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/S868
H1377: https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/H1377
H2895: https://malegislature.gov/Bills/192/H2895

We respectfully request that these bills be reported out of committee favorably.

We also endorse the Coalition to Create the MV Housing Bank (CCMVHB) https://www.ccmvhb.org/, which seeks to create an Island-wide housing bank, funded by a transfer fee, for the purpose of directly funding affordable, community, and attainable year-round housing efforts.
Thank you,

Joan Malkin, Chair

cc: Select Boards of Aquinnah, Chilmark, Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury & West Tisbury; Dukes County Commission; Tribal Council, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head/Aquinnah; Laura Silber, CCMVHB