



To: Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs
From: Catherine Dimitruk, Executive Director
Date: 3/10/26
Subject: S. 328, Sec. 1, Housing Targets

Thank you for the opportunity to address the language in Section 1 of S. 328. Overall, I appreciate the goal of additional municipal attention to the housing targets during the town planning process. I think the language as drafted could be onerous for many communities, and not necessarily attainable with the data and resources currently available.

Existing statute requires towns to include in their plans:

“(10) A housing element that shall include a recommended program for public and private actions *to address housing needs and targets as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title.* The program shall use data on year-round and seasonal dwellings and include specific actions to address the housing needs of persons with low income and persons with moderate income and account for permitted residential development as described in section 4412 of this title.” (emphasis added)

As a result, town plans already address housing, and the plans must include actions to address the municipal housing targets developed by the regional planning commissions.

Overall ideas for your consideration, if changes are made:

- Simplify the language in S. 328 to more broadly apply to all municipalities by adding additional requirements to the existing housing element currently in statute. and/or
- Require the most detailed analysis in S. 328 only of urban municipalities, or urban municipalities who are eligible for Tier 1b but do not opt in. Title 24 currently defines urban towns as those with a population of over 5,000 people (approximately 30 towns).

Of these options, I think adding additional language to the housing element could accomplish similar goals, and be attainable for all municipalities. Below is an example of expanded housing element language, using parts of the language in S. 328:

(10) A housing element that shall include a recommended program for public and private actions to address housing needs and targets as identified by the regional planning commission pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title. This shall include an analysis of any regulatory

and physical constraints preventing the development of sufficient housing to meet the housing needs and targets, and a description of what actions the municipality may take to accommodate the projected needed housing The program shall use data on year-round and seasonal dwellings and include specific actions to address the housing needs of persons with low income and persons with moderate income and account for permitted residential development as described in section 4412 of this title. Progress toward the construction of the housing units identified as needed to meet projected housing targets must be documented at each municipal plan adoption, or readoption pursuant to section 4358 or 4357 of this title.

Regional Planning Commission are meeting with municipalities to discuss the housing targets as part of our regional plan updates. As a result, we have collected significant community and public input about the challenges and opportunities to meeting the targets. At the end of this year, after all regional plans are updated, we would be happy to compile and share what we have learned.

Should the committee decide to move forward with a separate housing target section I have included a shortened version of S. 328 Sec. 1 below for your consideration.

Sec. 11. 24 V.S.A. § 4388 is added to read:

§ 4388. PLANNING FOR HOUSING TARGETS

(a) A municipal plan shall include an analysis of regulatory and physical constraints preventing the development of sufficient housing to meet the municipal housing targets developed pursuant to subdivision 4348a(a)(9) of this title including:

- (1) an inventory of publicly owned sites, including zoned, unzoned, vacant, underutilized, and potential redevelopment sites, available to meet the jurisdiction's needed housing types;
- (2) an analysis of any constraints to housing development, such as zoning, development standards, and infrastructure needs and capacity, that may affect the development of needed housing types; and
- (3) a detailed description of what actions the jurisdiction may take to accommodate the projected needed housing including:
 - (i) updates to any specific zoning or municipal bylaw provisions or maps; and
 - (ii) updates to specific infrastructure, including municipal water and sewer capacity.

(b) The housing element of the municipal plan may incorporate by reference any information or policies identified in other housing needs assessments adopted by the governing body.

(c) Progress toward the construction of the housing units identified as needed to meet projected housing needs must be documented at each municipal plan adoption, or readoption pursuant to section 4358 or 4357 of this title.