

Hearings set for transfer fee legislation

By **Brian Dowd** - October 19, 2021



A hearing has been scheduled on two bills that would allow for transfer fees to establish a housing bank. — Kelsey Perrett

The state legislature's Housing Committee is set to hold a hearing on affordable housing transfer fee legislation on Tuesday, Oct. 26, at 11 am.

Two bills will have hearings:
S.868 and H.1377 are the Senate and House versions of the same bill, with identical language. Those bills set the exemption threshold at the state median, which is \$503,000. It gives cities and towns the option to raise their exemption threshold.

A third transfer fee bill, H.2895, received a hearing in July. That bill allows cities and towns to set a 2 percent transfer fee on real estate transactions,

with an exemption threshold of \$1 million. In that bill, cities and towns can set their fee at 0 to 1.8 percent, and it will go toward affordable housing, while 0.2 percent would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development for statewide affordable housing measures.

To sign up to testify, people can fill out a form by 5 pm on Friday, Oct. 22, or submit written testimony by emailing Luke O'Roark at luke.oroark@mahouse.gov. The Coalition to Create the Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank has a template available for people to send letters of support to the legislature. That template can be found at its [website](#) by clicking the yellow banner at the top of the page.

The coalition is working to model a housing bank after the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank, and collect a 2 percent transfer fee on real estate transactions, paid by the buyer, but only on all dollars above \$1 million: A home purchased for \$999,999 would be exempt from the fee, while a home purchased for \$1.2

million would be taxed 2 percent on \$200,000.

According to coalition coordinator Laura Silber, the coalition continues to add to its list of supporters for the bills with recent support from the Martha's Vineyard Builders Association, the Chilmark planning board, the Edgartown planning board, the Edgartown Board of Trade, and the Aquinnah affordable housing committee.