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15 March 2022

**Officers:**

David Faber  
*President*  
Walt Looney  
*Treasurer*  
Nelson Smith  
*Clerk*

Senator John Keenan, Chair  
Joint Committee on Housing  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon St.  
Room 413-F  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative James Arciero, Chair  
Joint Committee on Housing  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon St.  
Room 38  
Boston, MA 02133

**Board Members:**

Margaret Curtin  
Luanne Johnson  
Christopher Neill  
Liz Olson  
Jeff Peters  
Connie Roosevelt  
Oscar Thompson

Dear Chair Keenan and Chair Arciero,

I write to you today in support of S868/H1377: An Act empowering cities and towns to impose a fee on certain real estate transactions to support affordable housing. This bill would allow municipalities to create a small fee on certain real estate transactions for the purpose of funding accessible and affordable housing in their own communities.

**Staff:**

Luanne Johnson  
*Director/Wildlife Biologist*

BiodiversityWorks is a non-profit conservation organization on the island of Martha's Vineyard, and we employ five full-time staff year-round who engage in projects that promote biodiversity conservation across the island. Lack of affordable housing for our year-round and seasonal staff has been a problem for many years, but has gotten much worse over the last three years. Currently, one of our full-time staff is planning to leave her position because she and her husband cannot find affordable housing suitable for a young family.

Liz Olson  
*Asst. Director/Wildlife Biologist*

We also endorse the Coalition to Create the Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank (CCMVHB), 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. BiodiversityWorks supports this coalition because of its commitment to focus on areas that already have development for housing projects rather than natural areas that support biodiversity and ecosystem services that benefit all species.

Angela Luckey  
Natural Neighbors Program  
Director

Matt Pelikan  
MV Atlas of Life Program  
Director

By advancing S868/H1377 you will be supporting the efforts of local coalitions like CCMVHB who have been working to find solutions to the housing crisis across the Commonwealth. We respectfully request that S868 and H1377 be reported out of committee favorably. Please note BiodiversityWorks' support.

Kayla Smith  
*Wildlife Biologist*

Sincerely,

Luanne Johnson (Oak Bluffs resident)

Director/Wildlife Biologist  
BiodiversityWorks  
Vineyard Haven, MA