



Martha's Vineyard
Agricultural Society

35 Panhandle Road | P.O. Box 73, West Tisbury, MA 02575

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www.marthasvineyardagriculturalsociety.org

April 7, 2022

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

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

Dear Chair Keenan and Chair Arciero,

I write to you today on behalf of the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society (MVAS), over 1,000 members strong, and an island institution since 1859, requesting legislative action to address our escalating housing crisis on Martha's Vineyard. We ask that you 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.

For over 160 years, MVAS has united Island farmers and producers in the development and improvement of local agricultural resources. But our future is at risk. We have heard overwhelmingly from our Island farmers and producers that they cannot find workers, because workers cannot find affordable housing. This lack of workers is directly affecting farmers' output and thus impacting their livelihood. We are also hearing from our farmers who are losing their own housing, because it is being sold for top dollar. This is unsustainable, and tears at the basic fabric of our community.

Whether it is safeguarding the amount of food being produced, keeping local restaurants and markets staffed to function, securing veterinary care for our animals, retaining medical workers to care for our community, housing teachers to educate our children, ensuring first responders can stay on Island to protect our safety, and keeping on-Island the dedicated conservation workers who care for our land, water, and coastline -- the basic functioning of every aspect of Island life is wholly dependent upon decisive action to address the housing crisis.



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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. 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. I respectfully request that S868 and H1377 be reported out of committee favorably. Please note my support.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored rectangular background.

Lauren Lynch
Executive Director