



TOWN OF AQUINNAH

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July 25, 2023

Representative Mark Cusack
Chairman, Committee on Revenue
Room 34, State House
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Susan Moran
Chairwoman, Committee on Revenue
Room 506, State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Cusack and Chairwoman Moran:

On behalf and with the full support of the Aquinnah Select Board, I write to express our town's strong support of the following bills:

- H. 3804 offered by Rep. Dylan Fernandes, "An Act establishing the Martha's Vineyard housing bank"
- S. 1782 offered by Sen. Julian Cyr, "An Act establishing the Martha's Vineyard housing bank"

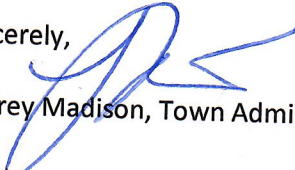
Our town voted overwhelmingly at Annual Town meeting to support these bills. My Select Board supports these bills, as well as transfer fee enabling legislation, because they will provide a steady funding stream to finance affordable community and attainable year-round housing.

Data from our regional planning agency, the Martha's Vineyard Commission, see https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/State_of_Housing_MV_2023_05_revised.pdf documents the critical shortage of such housing. Although Aquinnah meets the state's subsidized housing inventory metric of 10%, that does not come close to meeting the need. The housing crisis hurts our economy: our small tourism center of shops run by our Wampanoag tribal members cannot hire sufficient staff due to lack of housing; other Aquinnah employers remain open only by housing employees on site. Two long-time hardworking families recently won by lottery two affordable housing units in town, but many others are forced to leave for lack of an affordable home or rental. We cannot attract and retain health care and public safety workers. Schools for Aquinnah children watch valued teachers leave the island due to lack of housing.

Aquinnah recently committed 2% of short term rental tax revenue to add to other funding sources to bolster its housing funds, but our town and island desperately need the Housing Bank to be a robust funding source for affordable and attainable housing so we can build a strong and sustainable community for the future.

For Aquinnah's Select Board, I respectfully ask that you put these bills out favorably as soon as possible.

Sincerely,


Jeffrey Madison, Town Administrator