



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU

Governor

January 20, 2022

Dear Members of Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee,

New Hampshire is booming! Newly released data from the U.S. Census Bureau finds New Hampshire as the fastest growing state in the Northeast. I have always said that to keep our state growing, and our otherwise strong economy moving forward, we must address our housing shortage by making affordable housing readily available.

The Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy published a report in October 2021 titled *Residential Land-Use Regulations in New Hampshire: Causes and Consequences*. According to the report, “Widely available measures show that New Hampshire is one of the most restrictive states in the country for residential development.”¹ Further, data from the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security illustrates a stark correlation between rental housing supply and the percentage of millennials in a community – a key demographic to solving the state’s workforce challenges. Businesses and families across the Granite State are calling on policy makers to take the necessary steps to increase the housing supply so we can grow our workforce and sustain our vibrant economy.

That is why I convened a Housing Task Force that created this package of policy recommendations. Known as the *Community Toolbox Bill*, SB 400 is a package of incentives and requirements intended to help New Hampshire increase our housing supply.

Reintroduced for the 2022 session, the proposal reflects prior amendments and preserves local control. SB 400 will enable communities to use economic development tools for housing development and improve project review timelines. This includes incentives to cities and towns that relax local regulation, which aligns with the number one policy recommendation from the Bartlett Center Report to, “relax minimum lot size, setbacks, single-family only, minimum parking, and maximum height requirements.”

In addition, the bill advances more robust – but still voluntary – training for local planning and zoning officials and provides recognition for those communities that have stepped up to the plate through a new Housing Champion program.

For the benefit of New Hampshire’s economy, families, and communities, we must address our housing crisis with the right tools and a sense of urgency. Thank you for your serious consideration.

I hope this committee will join me in supporting SB 400.

Sincerely,

Christopher T. Sununu

Governor

¹Residential Land-Use Regulations in New Hampshire: Causes and Consequences; The Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy & Center for Ethics in Society at Saint Anselm College. <https://jbartlett.org/wp-content/uploads/Residential-Land-Use-Regulations-in-New-Hampshire-Report.pdf>