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HD3173: AN ACT RELATIVE TO HOUSING PRODUCTION

Massachusetts needs 17,000 new homes per year to meet housing demand and grow our economy. As increasing numbers of residents seek out multifamily housing options within walking distance to neighborhood amenities, Massachusetts continues to offer more single-family options. New tools are needed to help the Commonwealth meet housing demand, grow our economy, and provide a range of housing options in communities across the state.

The bill, filed by Chairman Honan, provides the tools necessary to meet the Commonwealth's housing needs. The legislation includes financial incentives and the removal of administrative barriers for communities as well as mandatory measures and new tools to build the kind of housing Massachusetts residents want.

Mandatory Measures:

- Require that all Massachusetts zoning ordinances and bylaws provide for the reasonable opportunity to build multifamily housing developments.
- Require cluster development be allowed as-of-right in all zoning districts that allow construction of detached single-family homes.

Financial Incentives:

- Study impacts of housing and identify ways to mitigate any potential negative net impacts on communities.
- Expand Chapter 40S to reimburse communities for demonstrated increased school costs resulting from the production of multifamily and cluster developments.
- Codify housing priority within MassWorks.

Removing Administrative Barriers:

- Streamline the disposition of state-owned land for the development of housing for low and moderate-income families.
- Changes to the Housing Development Incentive Program for Gateway Cities.
 - Change the definition of "market rate residential unit." The current definition requires units to be priced for households above 110% of the area median income.
 - Change the definition of Housing development project so that 50% of the units are market rate rather than 80%.

- Change the definition of “substantial rehabilitation” to “reuse” in order to give municipalities and developers more flexibility in transforming neighborhoods.

New Tools:

- Set a goal for state-assisted affordable small-scale community-based rental projects that fit the local community context and can address blighted properties and/or vacant land, and help stabilize or revitalize neighborhoods. A study to identify ways to redevelop underutilized or former commercial sites, known as greyfields, across the Commonwealth.
- Allow cities and towns to regionalize land use regulation and engage in inter-local development compacts at a local option.
- Restore the Office of State Planning to coordinate data collection, analysis and policy relating to the orderly growth and development of the Commonwealth.