



Smart Growth Multifamily Housing Production Legislation (HD.2718)

An Act relative to smart growth multifamily housing production

Sponsored by Rep. Christine Barber

This bill will promote smart growth housing production by requiring cities and towns with MBTA bus and rail service to zone for multifamily housing.

Restrictive zoning remains a key barrier to housing production. Consequently, Massachusetts has one of the lowest rates of housing production in the United States despite an increasing population and employment opportunities.

For multifamily production, 210 Massachusetts cities and towns haven't permitted such a development in over a decade. At the same time, between 2007–2016, Boston alone permitted nearly 32% of all housing units in the state. The city of Boston cannot meet the regional demand on its own.

The housing production bill would require cities and towns to plan at least one district where multifamily housing could be built as-of-right. The mandate would only apply to municipalities with land in close proximity to either MBTA stations (1/2 mile) or with bus stops that are part of frequently traveled routes (1/4 mile), as identified by the MBTA service delivery plan.

Under the bill, if communities fail to comply with the mandate, they will be deemed ineligible to receive funds or grants from certain state grant programs. Municipalities would also be able to apply to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for a determination that either no stops or stations exist in proximity to land in the town, or their zoning is not unreasonably restrictive of housing growth. The determination would then be used to establish eligibility for state funds and grants.



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