

OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD

STEPHEN W. DECOURCEY, CHAIR
DIANE M. MAHON, VICE CHAIR
JOHN V. HURD
LENARD T. DIGGINS
ERIC D. HELMUTH



730 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
TELEPHONE
781-316-3020
781-316-3029 FAX

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
MASSACHUSETTS 02476-4908

October 25, 2021

TO:

Representative James Arciero, House Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Representative John Rogers, House Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Senator John Keenan, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Senator Patricia Jehlen, Senate Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Housing

CC:

Luke O'Roark, Joint Committee on Housing aide
Senator Cindy Friedman
Representative Sean Garballey
Representative Dave Rogers

RE: H.1377/S.868 "An Act empowering cities and towns to support affordable housing with a fee on certain real estate transactions."

To the honorable Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee on Housing:

Since we are all well aware of the urgent need for more affordable housing, we can get to the point of emphasizing that we stand proudly beside all of our state delegation who are co-sponsors of H.1377/S.868. We greatly appreciate the strong and dedicated support of Senator Cindy Friedman, Representative Sean Garballey, and Representative Dave Rogers as Arlington tries to increase affordable housing in our town, region, and state.

To that end, before our 2021 Annual Town Meeting, the Arlington Select Board unanimously voted positive action on an article to file a Home Rule Petition allowing Arlington to create its own real estate transfer fee that would provide a revenue stream for our new Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). Creating the AHTF was part of our 2016 Housing Production Plan (HPP), and providing income to that fund will be an essential element in making the next iteration of our HPP more successful.

By a vote of 180 to 57 our 2021 Annual Town Meeting approved the Home Rule Petition (HRP) to create a real estate transfer fee, and we know that several other

municipalities have done the same. We trust that you agree that enabling local municipalities to create real estate transfer fee structures that fit their needs makes the process more efficient. Currently, there is much uncertainty as to when, or even if, an HRP will go into effect; an enabling act would remove that uncertainty, and perhaps it would encourage more municipalities to explore the use of this financing tool sooner rather than later.

Of course, we would appreciate the passing of the Bill for our Home Rule Petition for a real estate transfer fee, but with the full understanding that the need for housing extends all over our commonwealth, we would appreciate even more your support of H.1377/S.868.

Respectfully,
The Arlington Select Board