



December 2019

We had delayed the distribution of this annual Public Policy Fund request in hopes that we could have reported the news that Governor Baker's "Housing Choice Bill" had been approved by the Legislature, but alas, the bill still languishes without any action being taken in spite of the tremendous support for it from a significant coalition of organizations led by the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Massachusetts.

But the news is not all dire. This past year has proven that we continue to have the attention of the Baker-Polito Administration and that has brought with it a new and positive attitude toward housing production in Massachusetts. We, as an association, have been able to position ourselves as a strong, reputable voice and information source for legislators and regulators regarding housing and housing policy and regulation in the Commonwealth.

The Association's Public Policy Fund Initiative was created in 2002 to allow the association to target funds where needed to promote and defend the rights of builders and homeowners to produce and own safe and affordable housing. These funds are not used to pay for administrative or other expenses of the HBRAMA. They are used exclusively to advance our Public Policy Agenda.

In 2019, we allocated funds to underwrite an unprecedented examination of the zoning practices of 100 cities and towns from west of Boston to Route 495. This study is now being widely distributed and used by lawmakers, policy makers and municipal officials to find ways to reduce the cost of housing and increase production. Additionally, Public Policy Funds were recently used to produce and submit an amicus brief to the Supreme Judicial Court urging it to consider an appeal from a lower court decision that, if left to stand, greatly expands the rights of abutters to challenge special permits and variances. If the SJC does not take this appeal, it could have disastrous consequences for every builder and developer in the state.

Through it all, we have tried to be good stewards of the Public Policy Funds and use those monies in ways that are most beneficial to most members. Nevertheless, the fund needs to be replenished. **We are asking each member of HBRAMA to make a contribution the Public Policy Fund** to allow the association to continue its leadership in the state as "The Voice of the Housing Industry."

In addition to the initiatives cited above, over the past year the Association has

- Continued to furiously oppose anti-growth zoning reform on Beacon Hill.
- Pressed forward with efforts to streamline the natural gas line installation and construction process to reduce costs and provide a greater level of predictability.
- Worked closely with the Board of Building Regulations and Standards to eliminate unnecessary and costly code changes in the proposed 9th Edition of the State Building code, and are fighting ever increasing pressure to adopt mandated solar panels and net zero energy code provisions for all residential construction.

- Submitted in-depth testimony to the Legislature’s Joint Committee on Public Safety in opposition to a bill that would allow cities and towns to mandate fire sprinkler systems in all newly constructed one and two-family homes.
- Made progress with the Mass DEP that could actually lead to changes in septic flow standards and an increase in design flow above 10,000 gallons per day so that larger housing developments would not have to build costly waste water treatment plants.
- Partnered with the National Association of Home Builders to appeal certain provisions of the newly issued MS4 stormwater discharge permit for Massachusetts with a potential settlement only months away following a comment period.
- Continued to fend off efforts to weaken or repeal Chapter 40B and has maintained a dialogue with state housing agencies to streamline the 40B approval process.

The association estimates that member savings from our initiatives in the legislative and regulatory areas averaged between \$5,000 and \$7,500 per housing unit in 2019 alone. Fighting the implementation of this additional burden on new construction would not have been possible without our Public Policy funding and without the many members who continue to volunteer their time to review legislation and testify at critical legislative and regulatory hearings in defense of housing. The above savings are in addition to an estimated \$5,500 per housing start due to the advocacy of the National Association of Home Builders.

We must continue to have the resources to implement sound housing policy, influence public opinion through the media, continue to provide necessary research to strengthen our positions and work with other like-minded industries and associations to promote increased affordable housing production. The forces of NIMBYism and environmental extremism never rest, and neither will the HBRAMA.

Please consider making this investment in the future of your business.

“Public Policy Fund Initiative” Contribution Levels:

- **Influencer** - \$150
- **Playmaker** - \$300
- **Rulemaker** - \$750+

Please fill out the attached card indicating your ranking of issues that are most important to you and your business. This will help the association focus on those issues most important to its members and send it together with your check made payable to “HBRAMA Public Policy Fund” to HBRAMA 465 Waverley Oaks Rd. Suite 421 – Waltham, MA 02452 or visit www.HBRAMA.com/donate to fill out the survey and make your donation by credit card.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to the industry.

Sincerely,



Hunter Marosits, President



Matt Anderson, President Elect