

Amanda Linehan, Communications Manager
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
617-388-1556
alinehan@mapc.org

Andre Leroux, Executive Director
Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA)
617-251-3861
andre@ma-smartgrowth.org

For Immediate Release: Thursday, June 9, 2016

Senate Adopts Historic Bill to Reform the State's Housing and Zoning Laws

Boston – The Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) today congratulated the Massachusetts Senate for taking a historic vote to modernize the housing and land use laws governing zoning and development in Massachusetts.

S. 2311, "An Act to Promote Housing and Sustainable Development in the Commonwealth," will modernize the system cities and towns use to review and issue permits for both commercial and residential development. It will also help increase the production of housing for all ages and incomes, with provisions to preserve open space.

According to MAPC, Massachusetts will need 500,000 new housing units by 2040 to accommodate the existing population and projected growth. Without these new homes, the state won't be able to attract enough people to fill the jobs of 1.7 million Baby Boomers who are expected to retire by 2040.

"Today's legislation would give communities the planning and permitting tools that they need to grow in sensible locations and curb expensive sprawl that degrades our environment," said Andre Leroux, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance. "It represents years of collaboration among local officials, housing groups, environmentalists, the public health community, and municipal planners and attorneys. The Senate did a wonderful job balancing the needs to encourage new housing while giving communities the flexibility to chart their own future."

"This bill represents an historic accomplishment, modernizing our state land use laws for the first time in 40 years. It will help cities and towns to decide how and where they want to grow; it will offer residential and commercial developers a swifter and more predictable review process; and it will help us to build more housing for young people, families and senior citizens," said Marc Draisen, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the Regional Planning Agency for Greater Boston. "It's a truly landmark piece of legislation, which we hope the House and Governor will act upon before the session ends in July."

For more information, visit ma-smartgrowth.org and mapc.org.