

Submitted by Governor Mika 6footharvey

An ACT to REGULATE PUBLIC HOUSING, ALLOCATE FUNDS, ESTABLISH STATE INTERESTS, and OTHER PURPOSES.

Whereas homelessness and housing insecurity are significant problems throughout Atlantic, both in rural and urban areas, and

Whereas even residents with housing face high costs in markets with an insufficient supply of good housing, and

Whereas dense housing near good public transit is a cost effective strategy to give homeless and housing insecure people the hand up they need to a good life, and

Whereas the Commonwealth has the authority and expertise to construct and administer housing, and

Whereas this Assembly has previously allocated \$5,000,000,000 (five billion dollars) in the 2019 budget to new housing funding but not given specific instructions for spending it,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF ATLANTIC, IN ASSEMBLY

Section 1: Short Title

This bill may be referred to as the Ending Homelessness in Atlantic Act.

Section 2: Definitions

For the purposes of this Act,

- A. "Housing first" shall refer to the strategy to end homelessness as used by the National Alliance to End Homeless:
 - a. "a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Housing First does not require people experiencing homelessness to address all of their problems including behavioral health problems, or to graduate through a series of services programs before they can access housing. Housing First does

not mandate participation in services either before obtaining housing or in order to retain housing.”

- B. “High density” shall refer to development with higher than approximately 110 dwellings per net hectare

Section 3: Amending the Budget

Section 18 of the [Northeast Budget beginning Oct 1 2019](#) is amended to read

- A. The Assembly notes it has appropriated an additional \$5,000,000,000 (five billion dollars) to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal
- B. The Assembly directs the Division to offer the funding to construct additional affordable housing through grants to housing authorities in the Commonwealth
 - a. Authorities may receive up to \$1,000,000,000 (one billion dollars) each in grants if they
 - i. Show that their community has a population experiencing homelessness or insecurity;
 - ii. Show that their community has strong public transit that offers access to work, leisure, and essential retail such as groceries;
 - iii. Commit to housing as many members of their current homeless population as possible on a so-called “housing first” strategy; and
 - iv. Commit to using funds to create high density new public housing units, either through renovation or new construction
 - b. The Division shall prioritize offering grants to authorities which show some or any of
 - i. Extreme need
 - ii. Excellent and affordable public transit
 - iii. Commitment from local government and civil society to leveraging public housing to end homelessness
 - iv. Commitments or a high probability of success in securing additional public or private investment
 - c. If the Division identifies areas of the state with extreme need but does not receive a satisfactory application from the local housing authority, or there is no local housing authority, the Division may construct and operate qualifying public housing in that area.
 - i. The Division is authorized to acquire appropriate sites near excellent and affordable public transit with the Commonwealth’s eminent domain power.

and the Assembly finds that such acquisitions are in the state interest and not subject to local density or use regulations

- C. The Division shall regularly report to the Assembly on its progress distributing the funds, how many units it has added, and how many formerly homeless people it has housed.