



January 25, 2023

Adam Turner, Executive Director
Martha's Vineyard Commission
33 New York Ave,
Oak Bluffs, MA 02557

Dear Mr. Turner,

Please accept this as a letter of support for the Southern Tier Project on behalf of Martha's Vineyard Community Services. MV Community Services has a workforce approximating 135 and serves one-in-four Islanders. The Island's housing crisis continues to have a negative impact on our economy and infrastructure. In addition, housing shortfalls affect the capacity of nonprofit organizations such as MV Community Services to develop the workforce capacity needed to sustain the full range of services needed by the Island community.

Island Housing Trust (IHT) and Affirmative Investments (AI) partnership was selected by the Town of Oak Bluffs in May of 2022 to develop and manage the project consisting of 45 affordable rentals. The project is within walking distance to Martha's Vineyard Community Services, as it neighbors and provides a walkway to the YMCA of Martha's Vineyard.

In the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment produced by the Martha's Vineyard Commission, the Island's eroding socio-economic diversity was one of several factors impacted by the skyrocketing real estate market. The report found that many households are forced to search areas away from the Town's denser areas to find affordable housing. Living in remote areas of Martha's Vineyard makes access to healthcare, social services, and other supportive resources difficult for some of our Island's most vulnerable populations. Populations served by MV Community Services.

The Housing Needs Assessment also recommended an ambitious goal of producing 50 units of affordable and community housing annually to address housing shortfalls. The Southern Tier project directly tackles this critical need by providing 100% affordable and community housing for year-round families and residents. Given this need, MV Community Services fully supports the Island Housing Trust and Affirmative Investments in their effort to develop Southern Tier and provide the much needed affordable housing to the town of Oak Bluffs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Elizabeth Folcarelli'.

Elizabeth Folcarelli, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer