

Rhode Island House Finance Committee

House Bill No. 7224

Regarding: Budget Article 3, Section 17 - Statewide Mandatory Lead Registry

Thursday, February 29, 2024

IN SUPPORT of the amendments

My name is Kelly Moran and I am submitting this testimony in support of the proposed amendments to the Lead Registry for Rental Properties.

I am a REALTOR®, residential property manager, landlord, and commissioner for the Historic District of Newport. Working in a city (and state) with much of the oldest housing stock country-wide, lead and lead mitigation are everyday topics in both my line of work and personal endeavors. While the state shall prioritize eliminating the legitimate threat of lead poisoning, we can move toward improved disclosure and mitigation without presenting property owners with rapid undue burden.

The proposal to move the registry date out to 2025 is critical. Landlords, and more particularly owner-occupied landlords who were previously exempt from obtaining certificates, may be presented with costly and/or time-consuming maintenance to their property. Many of these properties have provided tenants with long-term housing security which could be put in jeopardy. Some landlords may be forced to vacate these long-term tenants to bring their properties to compliance and increase rent to market value to help cover the cost of remediation, directly exacerbating housing unaffordability throughout the state.

The Lead Abatement Income Tax Credits available are exceptionally limited to those landlords whose household income is less than \$55,400 annually; serving very few. Additionally, a maximum of \$250,000 of program funds available (§ 44-30.3-2.) is simply not adequate to support the demand.

Property owners in historic districts stand to face the most significant burden considering they are bound by vital preservation standards and limitations. Restoration of windows and doors, where lead paint is most likely to be present, can be expensive and take time, presenting these particular landlords with added challenges. These stewards of history so valuable to our state's historic fabric and resources must be considered.

Lastly, the slimming of required personal information available on the public-facing registry is also an improvement as any noncompliant landlords could endure harassment while they work to bring their properties to compliance. I urge the committee to consider these encumbrances to landlords when voting on this amendment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kelly Moran

401-855-9033

kgmresidential@gmail.com