



March 18, 2026

Rhode Island General Assembly
House Committee on Judiciary
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Chair Carol Hagan McEntee

RE: HB 7758 - AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- BED BUGS IN RESIDENTIAL PREMISES ACT

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The New England Pest Management Association (NEPMA) represents the professional pest management industry in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Our members in Rhode Island are committed to providing high-quality pest management services that protect public health, food and property. **We appreciate this opportunity to share our thoughts on HB 7758 and respectfully ask that you support this legislation.**

In the past two decades, bed bug populations re-emerged in staggering numbers and are continuing to rise across the United States. In 2025, the pest management company Orkin released its annual “Top 50 Bed Bug Cities List,” which included the neighboring state city of Hartford, Connecticut.¹ While Rhode Island cities are not in the top 50, HB 7758 presents the opportunity for Rhode Island to join other states, like Colorado, in ensuring that all residents have access to the most proactive and effective treatments for bed bug infestations—those performed by professionals trained, certified, and licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM).

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists bed bugs on its list of “Pests of Significant Public Health Importance” due to the physical and mental toll these insects take on their victims.² EPA has stated that these tolls include physical issues, such as allergic reactions and secondary infections to bed bug bites, and increased “anxiety, insomnia and systemic reactions” in persons enduring bed bug infestations.³ Additionally, a 2020 study on bed bugs in Chicago found that “...bed bug infestations are a problem of poverty in which the public

¹ “Orkin Reveals 2025’s Top 50 Bed Bug Cities List”,
<https://www.orkin.com/press-room/worst-cities-for-bed-bugs-annual-rankings>

² See, <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/list-pests-significant-public-health-importance>

³ “Bed Bugs: A Public Health Issue | US EPA,” Bed Bugs: A Public Health Issue,
<https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/bed-bugs-public-health-issue>.



health burden falls disproportionately on poorer neighborhoods.”⁴ It is for these reasons that we must detect and eradicate bed bug populations as quickly as possible.

HB 7758 will achieve this goal by requiring successful collaboration between landlords, tenants, and pest management professionals. Recent research shows that “bed bug control in multifamily housing is dependent on collaboration and face-to-face communication between residents, housing administrators and PMPs.”⁵ This collaboration will remove the stigma surrounding pest infestations and allow for quick inspections and necessary treatments by professionals to eliminate bed bug populations.

This bill delineates the responsibilities of all parties and clearly states expectations and timetables that are in line with industry recommendations for successful treatments. This bill will also save landlords money in the long term, by preserving property values. Though the disclosure and initial treatment phase may increase short-term costs, researchers determined that “reductions of infestation prevalence lead, on average, to savings” for landlords.⁶ This bill protects the livelihood of Rhode Islanders while preserving the economic value of rental management in the state.

In conclusion, we are happy to be a resource in the policymaking process and applaud the efforts of the committee to address bed bug infestations in Rhode Island. This bill will protect at-risk and low-income populations, address a concerning mental and physical public health situation, and protect the income and property value of rental dwellings in the state. We firmly believe that the state of Rhode Island can be a public health trendsetter by adopting this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to inform the Judiciary Committee as to how the professional pest management industry protects public health and property through our bed bug inspections and treatments. It is for the reasons shared above we **respectfully ask the Committee to support HB 7758.**

Sincerely

Nathan Jewett ACE
State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR)
New England Pest Management Association (NPMA)
NATHAN@BIGBLUEBUG.COM

⁴ Sutherland, C, Greenlee, AJ, Schneider, D. Socioeconomic drivers of urban pest prevalence. *People Nat.* 2020; 2: 776–783. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10096>

⁵ Bennett, Gary W., Gondhalekar, Ameya D. et al. (2016). Using Research and Education to Implement Practical Bed Bug Control Programs in Multifamily Housing. *Pest Management Science.* Jan;72(1):8-14. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26251256/>

⁶ Xie, S., Hill, A. L., Rehmann, C. R., & Levy, M. Z. (2019). Dynamics of bed bug infestations and control under disclosure policies. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(13), 6473-6481. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1814647116>