



*Distinctive Communities  
Powerful Alliance*

March 26, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 8101 – AN ACT RELATING TO PROPERTY -- ABANDONED PROPERTY

Dear Chair McEntee and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express our support for House Bill 8101, which would amend the definitions of “abandoned property” and “public nuisance” under Rhode Island law. Rhode Island’s abandoned-property statute (RIGL 34-44) creates a court-based system that allows cities or towns, certain nonprofit organizations, and neighbors to intervene when a building becomes abandoned and unsafe, usually by appointing a receiver to rehabilitate the property and return it to productive use. This statute has been an important tool for municipalities to protect neighborhoods, maintain property values, and ensure public safety.

However, some entities have taken advantage of the lack of clear standards in the law for what constitutes an abandoned or public nuisance property. Dozens of properties at a time have been submitted in petitions for receivership without proper due diligence to confirm that the properties are actually abandoned. As a result, property owners, who may have no knowledge that their property is being targeted, can find themselves facing expensive legal proceedings or even at risk of losing their property through an expedited receivership ruling. This situation creates challenges for municipalities, stretching staff resources and complicating the enforcement of the abandoned-property statute.

House Bill 8101 addresses these issues by establishing clearer standards and procedures. The bill requires that properties subject to the statute be listed on the municipal inventory of abandoned properties, which is already mandated under existing law. It also clarifies that a property must have been the subject of a notice of violation from the municipality or other authority, and that the owner failed to address the violations within the allotted timeframe, before any receivership proceedings may occur. The legislation further ensures that a receiver, whether temporary or permanent, cannot be appointed unless the property owner has been notified of the petition and afforded an opportunity for hearing, strengthening due process protections.

For municipalities, this legislation provides much-needed clarity and legal protection. It allows cities and towns to focus their resources on properties that are genuinely abandoned or unsafe, while reducing administrative burdens and the risk of legal challenges. By clarifying procedures and documentation requirements, House Bill 8101 supports municipalities in their ongoing efforts to rehabilitate abandoned properties, improve neighborhood safety, and maintain property values.

For these reasons, the League supports House Bill 8101 and urges the Committee to approve its passage. This legislation strikes a careful balance between empowering municipalities, protecting property owners' rights, and ensuring that abandoned or unsafe properties are returned to productive use for the benefit of communities across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'R. R. Rossi'.

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Judiciary Committee