



**Department of Business Regulation
Office of the Director**

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March 17, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chairperson, House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H 7563 – AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES – THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
EFFICIENCY ACT

Dear Chairman Casey:

I am writing on behalf of the Department of Business Regulation to assist the Committee with consideration of H7563. This bill would allow property owners or their contractors to hire licensed third-party professionals to conduct plan review and perform building inspections, which responsibilities are currently within the statutory authority and performed by state and local building officials. In instances where a third-party provider was used, the state/local authority would be required to reduce the permitting fees.

The proposed act would conflict with existing Building Code statutes and regulations as well as current Fire Code statutes and regulations that have corresponding plan review and inspection requirements. See R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 23-27.3-128.5 (state and local building officials responsible for permitting, inspection, plan review), 23-27.3-107.6 and 23-27.3-107.7 (education, training and certification requirements for building officials and inspectors), 23-27.3-115.6 (requirement that all building permitting be conducted by means of the state's e-permitting system), and 23-27.3-119.0 and 510-RICR-00-00-21 (statewide uniform permitting fees). Moreover, there are already statutory mechanisms in place that allow and facilitate the use of third-party professionals for inspections and plan review upon request and appropriate certifications to the state or local building official and which permit the use of a qualified third party to inspect in instances where the building official fails to timely perform buildings inspections. See R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 23-27.3-128.5.1, 23-27.3-128.5.2 and 23-27.3-111.2(b).

Having third parties conduct plan review and inspections for their business clients instead of state and local building officials would present financial and other conflicts of interest for the third-party providers who necessarily have a duty to their private clients and do not have a statutory or independent duty vis-à-vis State Building Code compliance and enforcement. This could also increase costs of professional liability insurance for the third-party providers.

We respectfully suggest that the current statutory mechanisms for use of third-party professionals for inspections and plan review remain intact. We would be happy to meet with the Committee and/or sponsors to discuss further streamlining and efficiencies. Please do not hesitate to contact me at Elizabeth.dwyer@dbr.ri.gov or 401.462.9615 (office) or 401.578.6653 (mobile) with any questions or for additional information.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Kelleher Dwyer, Esq.
Director, Department of Business Regulation

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Honorable Robert Quattrocchi
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House