

March 17, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 7658– AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- HOUSING MAINTENANCE
AND OCCUPANCY CODE -- NOTICE OF VIOLATIONS

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we write to express concerns with House Bill 7658, which would require housing code enforcement officers to provide copies of violation notices and hearing information to all tenants affected by a housing code violation.

At the outset, the League would like to acknowledge and appreciate the intent of this legislation. Ensuring that tenants are informed of housing code violations that may impact their health, safety, and well-being is an important objective that municipalities share. Transparency and tenant awareness are critical components of effective housing policy.

However, we respectfully oppose the bill as currently drafted due to several practical and operational challenges it presents for our cities and towns.

First, the requirement that enforcement officers serve notice to all tenants, either in person or by certified or registered mail, creates a significant administrative and financial burden on local code enforcement departments. Many municipalities already operate with limited staffing and resources, and this mandate would substantially increase workload, particularly in multi-unit properties where identifying and serving all occupants may be difficult or impractical.

Second, the bill raises concerns regarding implementation feasibility. In many cases, municipalities may not have accurate or up-to-date records of all tenants residing in a property. Requiring certified mailing or personal service to each tenant could delay enforcement actions and complicate efforts to bring properties into compliance in a timely manner.

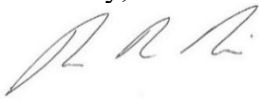
Additionally, while the bill aims to enhance communication with tenants, it does not fully account for existing notification practices that municipalities use effectively, such as posting notices on the property or coordinating directly with property owners and managers. A one-size-fits-all statutory requirement may inadvertently limit flexibility and create inefficiencies in local enforcement processes.

The League believes that greater collaboration with municipalities would help refine this proposal to better balance tenant protections with real-world operational constraints. Local officials and code enforcement professionals can provide valuable insight into workable notification methods that achieve the bill's intent without imposing undue burdens.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this legislation and would welcome continued discussion with the sponsor and municipal stakeholders in developing an effective approach supporting both tenant awareness and municipal capacity.

Thank you for your consideration of our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. R. Rossi', written in a cursive style.

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Municipal Government and Housing