



April 29, 2026

Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chairman, House Municipal Government & Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H7774 - Oppose

Dear Chairman Casey:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance (the “Alliance”), I write in opposition to H7774 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety -- State Building Code.

Rhode Island is in the midst of a housing shortage. The State should be focused on removing barriers to production, improving predictability, and making it easier to finance and complete new housing projects. H7774 moves Rhode Island in the opposite direction.

As introduced, H7774 would require adoption of the 2024 International Residential Code for one- to four-family dwellings and then impose a moratorium until January 1, 2030 on changing any state building code applicable to those structures unless separately approved by the General Assembly and made effective by the Governor. Whatever its intent, the practical effect is to freeze the code process for a critical segment of the housing market and replace technical judgment with legislative delay.

Building codes should be administered through an expert-driven process that allows for practical adjustments as issues arise in the field. Materials change. Construction methods change. Costs change. Implementation problems emerge. A rigid statutory freeze prevents the State from responding in real time and instead forces even reasonable, technical, commonsense adjustments into a slower and more political process.

The impact on one- to four-family housing could be especially damaging. These are often the very projects that can add needed housing supply more quickly at a smaller scale. But they are also highly sensitive to cost, delay, and regulatory uncertainty. When margins are thin and financing is tight, even modest uncertainty can kill a deal. H7774 would add precisely that kind of uncertainty by telling builders, lenders, and property owners that if problems arise with the

code, relief may depend on legislative action rather than a timely technical response.

To be clear, the Alliance supports clear, modern, and workable building standards. Our concern is not with updated codes in principle. It is with the decision to lock the code in place through 2030 and tie the hands of the technical bodies responsible for administering it. If the State is serious about housing, it should preserve the ability to make practical refinements that improve constructability, address unintended consequences, and keep projects moving.

Rhode Island does not need more rigidity in housing policy. It needs more housing. H7774 risks making smaller residential projects harder to deliver, more expensive to build, and less attractive to pursue. For those reasons, the Alliance respectfully urges the Committee to oppose H7774.

Sincerely,

Gregory Tumolo

Gregory Tumolo, Executive Director
Rhode Island Business Leaders Alliance

CC: Members of the House Municipal Government & Housing Committee