



March 26, 2026

The Honorable Jacob Bissaillon  
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government  
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence RI 02903

**Re: SUPPORT for S-2264**

Dear Chair Bissaillon and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI), I write **in support of S-2264**, which provides for warming and cooling center alerts to trigger certain procedures for municipalities during extreme temperatures to help at-risk individuals with resources. HNRI is a statewide alliance of members and partners serving low-income Rhode Islanders, who share the vision that all Rhode Islanders live in safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities. Our alliance includes 19 nonprofit housing developers who own and operate more than 7,500 rental homes for low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders, as well as organizations who provide support and other services to the more than 2,500 Rhode Islanders who are experiencing homelessness.

This past winter, our state experienced long stretches of extreme cold, which sadly, resulted in the known deaths of Rhode Islanders who did not have adequate shelter. The proposed legislation would help to reduce or eliminate deaths and serious health complications of extreme heat and cold exposure by creating a process for municipalities to develop and implement cooling and warming center alert plans during critical periods, as well as stipulations for how and when warming/cooling centers are to operate during declared emergency periods. As demonstrated by the crisis this winter, establishing protocols that can be reliably communicated and transmitted at all levels of government and to vulnerable individuals in need of relief from extreme temperatures is crucial to avoid human harm and establish predictability for emergency preparedness across the state. The planning, preparedness and establishment of safe cooling and warming centers can alleviate the burden on local emergency services and healthcare facilities by helping to prevent illnesses and emergencies associated with exposure to extreme temperatures, and ensuring there is a known place for residents to seek relief.

S-2264 helps to address the urgent needs of at-risk Rhode Islanders during extreme heat and cold and improves the overall system of public safety and emergency preparedness statewide. I encourage the Committee to support this bill. Please feel free to contact me at (401) 721-5680 ext. 104 or [mlodge@housingnetworkri.org](mailto:mlodge@housingnetworkri.org) with any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melina Lodge". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melina Lodge, Executive Director