



*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 26, 2026

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

RE: SENATE BILL 2264 – AN ACT RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE -- EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Dear Chair Bissaillon and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 2264, which establishes requirements for warming and cooling center alerts and related municipal response efforts.

The League appreciates the intent of this legislation and shares the goal of protecting vulnerable residents, particularly those at risk of exposure during extreme weather conditions. We commend the sponsor for bringing forward this important proposal. Ensuring the safety and well-being of Rhode Island's most vulnerable residents during extreme weather events is a critical public policy priority, and municipalities across the state are often on the front lines of these efforts. Cities and towns regularly partner with emergency management officials, local organizations, and community groups to provide support during periods of severe cold and heat.

While we support the underlying objectives of the bill, we respectfully note that certain provisions, as presently drafted, may present practical challenges for municipalities, particularly those with limited staffing and resources. Requirements related to continuous 24-hour operations, mandated services, and specific activation thresholds could create operational and fiscal pressures that may be difficult to sustain over time, especially for smaller communities.

We continue to believe there is an opportunity to strengthen this legislation by incorporating additional flexibility that reflects the diverse capacities of Rhode Island's cities and towns. Allowing for regional approaches, recognizing partnerships with nonprofit providers, and providing municipalities with reasonable discretion in how they meet service expectations would help ensure the bill's goals can be achieved effectively and sustainably. Additionally, consideration of funding mechanisms or enhanced state-level support would be important to successful implementation.

The League welcomes the opportunity to continue working with the bill sponsor to address these considerations and help refine the legislation in a way that supports both vulnerable populations and the municipalities serving them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of Senate Housing and Municipal Government