



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

April 9, 2026

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

Dear Chair Bissaillon, Vice Chair DiMario, and Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the City of Providence, I write in strong support of Senate Bill 2912, *An Act Relating to Property—Abandoned Property*. This legislation makes thoughtful and necessary updates to Rhode Island's Abandoned Property Act to ensure the law is used as intended: to address genuinely abandoned, unsafe, or nuisance properties while protecting responsible property owners.

The Abandoned Property Act can be an important tool to address blighted, problem properties when used appropriately. Unfortunately, in recent years the absence of clear statutory standards has enabled the misuse of this process, resulting in properties which have no code violations or other infractions being targeted under the Law.

For the City of Providence, this legislation is particularly important. City-petitioned receivership has proven to be a powerful tool in addressing blighted or neglected properties when conditions necessitate. However, instances of redundant or insufficiently vetted filings by external parties have caused avoidable delays, added costs, and inefficiencies in an already complex redevelopment process. In some instances, without appropriate safeguards like those followed by the City before filing petitions, Providence constituents have found themselves drawn into costly legal proceedings or even facing the risk of losing their occupied, habitable properties through expedited receivership rulings.

Senate Bill 2912 addresses these issues by strengthening due process protections, ensuring petitions focus only on properties with documented violations, and clarifying key definitions to prevent misuse of the statute. These reforms strike an important balance between enabling action on problematic properties and safeguarding responsible homeowners.

I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 2912.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett P. Smiley".

Brett P. Smiley
Mayor