



April 6, 2026

The Hon. Senator Jacob Bissaillon
Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: S2912- AN ACT RELATING TO ABANDONED PROPERTY

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of S2912. RIAR represents more than 5,900 licensed real estate professionals who list, sell, lease, manage, and appraise residential and commercial real estate to make Rhode Island a better place to call home.

S2912 amends Rhode Island’s abandoned property statute by refining how properties are classified as “abandoned” or a “public nuisance” and by establishing clearer procedural requirements before enforcement actions may proceed. Specifically, the bill requires that property owners receive notice of code violations and fail to address those violations within prescribed timeframes before a property may be deemed abandoned. It also requires documented evidence, such as code violations, condemnation records, or findings from public officials, before a property may be classified as a public nuisance.

The bill further clarifies that properties should not be considered abandoned solely due to vacancy where they are being maintained, actively marketed, or part of a redevelopment plan. At the same time, it preserves existing municipal and court authority to enforce housing standards, including the ability to seek injunctions and appoint receivers where necessary.

Refines the Definition of Abandoned Property

S2912 distinguishes between genuinely neglected properties and those that are vacant but responsibly maintained.

- Conditions a finding of abandonment on prior notice and failure to cure violations.
- Excludes properties that are maintained, marketed, or part of redevelopment efforts.
- Limits reliance on subjective indicators such as vacancy alone.

Introduces Objective Standards for Public Nuisance Determinations

The bill anchors nuisance determinations in documented and verifiable conditions.

- Requires documented code violations, condemnation, or official findings.
- Bases determinations on objective evidence rather than general observations.
- Promotes more uniform application across municipalities.

Reinforces Notice and Due Process Protections

S2912 ensures that property owners are afforded clear notice and an opportunity to address issues before court intervention.

- Mandates documented notice and defined cure periods.
- Preserves structured timelines for hearings and enforcement.
- Ensures fair and predictable legal process for affected property owners.

Retains Enforcement Authority While Adding Guardrails

The bill maintains existing tools to address problem properties while improving how they are applied.

- Maintains municipal authority to seek injunctive relief.
- Authorizes continued use of court-appointed receivers when necessary.
- Establishes clearer thresholds and documentation requirements for intervention.

Conclusion

S2912 provides a thoughtful refinement of Rhode Island's abandoned property framework. By clarifying definitions, strengthening documentation requirements, and reinforcing due process protections, it improves fairness while preserving effective enforcement tools.

These changes will help ensure that enforcement efforts are focused on genuinely neglected properties while protecting responsible property owners from unintended consequences.

The Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® respectfully urges the Committee to support S2912.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Trevor J. Chasse
Director, Government Affairs
Rhode Island Association of REALTORS®