



Mayor Brett P. Smiley

Department of Inspection and Standards

Director, James C. Moore III, CBO, CFM

Deputy Director, Kevin Mahoney

February 4, 2025

Chairman Steve Casey
House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St
Providence RI, 02903

Dear Chairman Casey and Honorable members of the committee:

I write this letter in strong support of House Bill 5100, entitled **AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- STATE BUILDING CODE -- ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT**. This legislation, if passed, would authorize municipalities to declare an emergency under limited circumstances, allowing for the construction and temporary use of SAVE Units. These units have specialized requirements and exemptions from state fire and building codes.

Providence's Department of Inspections and Standards would like to thank Speaker Shekarchi for his commitment to streamlining the process for emergency and temporary structures. The City of Providence, like many other communities, is facing a housing crisis exacerbated by a lack of temporary or emergency shelter space, often due to outdated building code restrictions. If passed, this bill will allow for a streamlined process for emergency shelter, saving lives and providing individuals with shelter when they need it most.

The Department of Inspections and Standards would also like to make suggestions that, if addressed, could further strengthen this legislation, primarily regarding the safety of occupants. We understand that these structures will be used for short-term stays (30-60 days) and will serve individuals who may face challenges in responding to emergency situations, particularly fires. Our primary concerns relate to egress, specifically ensuring proper lighting and the ability for occupants to exit safely and efficiently in case of an emergency. Additionally, we would like to see further clarification on the **early notification system**, particularly regarding how emergency data will be transmitted to relevant City Departments.

The Department of Inspections and Standards, along with the Mayor's Office, is eager to collaborate further on this bill. Once again, we extend our sincere appreciation to Speaker Shekarchi for his leadership on this critical issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Moore III".

James Moore III
Director of Inspections and Standards