

2026 -- H 7865

LC005410

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO INSURANCE -- WEATHER-RELATED LOSSES

Introduced By: Representatives Kennedy, Solomon, Edwards, O'Brien, Serpa, Spears,  
Cotter, Azzinaro, Diaz, and Shallcross Smith

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Corporations

(Dept. of Business Regulation)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 27-76 of the General Laws entitled "Weather-Related Losses" is  
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **27-76-10. Strengthen Rhody homes.**

4 (a) There is hereby established within the department of business regulation, division of  
5 insurance, the "strengthen Rhody homes" program.

6 (b) This section does not create an entitlement for property owners or obligate the state in  
7 any way to fund the inspection, construction, or retrofitting of residential property in this state.  
8 Implementation of the program is subject to the receipt of federal grants or funds from other sources  
9 of grants or funds. The insurance superintendent shall use its best efforts to obtain grants or funds  
10 from the federal government or other funding sources to supplement the financial  
11 resources of the strengthen Rhody homes program that may be provided by the state.

12 (c) The strengthen Rhody homes program may apply for and receive financial grants or  
13 grants to construct or retrofit insurable property to resist loss due to a hurricane or other catastrophic  
14 events.

15 (d) The strengthen Rhody homes program may also make grants or funding available to  
16 nonprofit entities for projects to construct or retrofit insurable properties to resist loss due to  
17 hurricane or other catastrophic windstorm if such grants or funding to nonprofit entities are  
18 allowable under grant or funding rules, requirements, guidelines, or criteria. However, a nonprofit  
19 entity shall agree to administer the grants or funds as the strengthen Rhody homes program would

1 be required to administer grants or funds, and the entity shall provide documentation to the  
2 insurance superintendent in a timely manner as requested by the insurance superintendent.

3 (e) All mitigation shall be based upon the securing of all required local permits and  
4 applicable inspections in keeping with local building codes and the Insurance Institute for Business  
5 and Home Safety (IBHS) Fortified Homes Program. Mitigation projects are subject to random  
6 reinspection of all projects.

7 (f) The insurance division may promulgate rules and eligibility requirements necessary for  
8 the proper administration of this section and pursuant to any instructions or requirements on grants  
9 or funds received by the insurance superintendent for the strengthen Rhody homes program.

10 (g) Strengthen Rhody homes program.

11 (1) The strengthen Rhody homes program is hereby created to make grants available to  
12 residential Rhode Island homeowners to undertake resilience construction or retrofits to make the  
13 residential home more resilient to a hurricane or other catastrophic risk.

14 (2) To be eligible for a grant, residential property owners applying for a grant must be able  
15 to meet the eligibility requirements as set forth by the insurance division for each grant type. These  
16 requirements shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

17 (i) The residential property owner shall claim their primary residence in a county where  
18 grants are being approved at the property to be improved;

19 (ii) The home to be mitigated shall be an owner-occupied, single family, primary residence,  
20 and cannot be a condominium or mobile home;

21 (iii) The home shall be in good repair unless damaged by a hurricane or other catastrophic  
22 windstorm event. Strengthen Rhody homes program grant funds cannot be used for maintenance  
23 or repairs, but may be used in conjunction with repairs or reconstruction necessitated by damages  
24 from a catastrophic event;

25 (iv) A certified IBHS evaluator shall prequalify the insurable property as mitigable and  
26 identify all improvements required to achieve IBHS FORTIFIED Roof™ (Roof), FORTIFIED  
27 Silver™ (Silver), FORTIFIED Gold™ (Gold), or successor designation, or similar standard  
28 approved by the insurance division. The residential property owner shall select the evaluator from  
29 a list provided by the strengthen Rhody homes program and shall pay the evaluator's fee;

30 (v) The residential property owner shall obtain bids from at least three (3) IBHS certified  
31 contractors approved by the strengthen Rhody homes program;

32 (vi) The residential property owner shall construct or retrofit the home to the IBHS Roof,  
33 Silver, Gold, or successor designation or similar standard approved by the insurance  
34 superintendent;

1           (vii) The residential property owner shall provide proof of an in-force policy providing  
2 wind insurance on the home;

3           (viii) If the insurable property is in a special flood hazard area, the residential property  
4 owner shall provide proof of an in-force flood insurance policy. The flood policy may be from the  
5 National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) or a private carrier; and

6           (ix) Grant applications shall be filed in the manner directed by the insurance division in the  
7 form and manner prescribed by the insurance superintendent, along with any applicable transaction  
8 fees.

9           (3) Documents, materials, and other information submitted to the insurance superintendent  
10 by property owners or insurance companies in support of a grant application shall be confidential  
11 by law and privileged, shall not be subject to open records requests, shall not be subject to subpoena,  
12 and shall not be subject to discovery or admissible in evidence in any private civil action.

13           (4) Grants to residential property owners shall be used to construct or retrofit an insurable  
14 property to resist loss due to a hurricane or other catastrophic event.

15           (5) Retrofit projects within three (3) months of the date the residential property owner  
16 receives notice of the grant approval. New builds shall be completed within the timeframe approved  
17 by the insurance superintendent. Failure to complete the project timely may result in forfeiture of  
18 the grant.

19           (6) Grant funds shall only be paid once a certificate has been issued for the IBHS standard  
20 or similar approved by the insurance superintendent. Grant funds shall be paid by the insurance  
21 superintendent or another designated agency, on behalf of the residential property owner, directly  
22 to the contractor who performed the mitigation work.

23           (7) Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis within each income tier  
24 established by the superintendent, with priority given to lower-income applicants, applicants who  
25 live in locations that, based on historical data, have a higher susceptibility to catastrophic weather  
26 events, and applicants meeting any other criteria the insurance superintendent determines is  
27 appropriate to meet the purpose of the program.

28           (8) Any entity providing funds to the strengthen Rhody homes program shall be permitted  
29 to establish additional rules and guidelines under which those funds may be used, as long as such  
30 rules and guidelines do not violate any state or federal law.

31           (9) The insurance division may conduct random inspections of funds, records, and/or  
32 properties to detect any fraud. These inspections may be conducted similarly to those in chapters  
33 13.1 and 71 of title 27.

34           (10) Under the strengthen Rhody homes program, a residential property owner shall hire

1 an IBHS certified contractor who is capable of performing work that satisfies the standards  
2 prescribed by this section and the rules adopted thereto:

3 (i) The insurance superintendent shall not endorse or otherwise provide preferential  
4 treatment to any contractor;

5 (ii) A residential property owner is legally responsible for any amount owed to a contractor  
6 that exceeds awarded grant monies;

7 (iii) To be eligible to work on a project funded by the strengthen Rhody homes program as  
8 a contractor, a contractor shall meet all program requirements including, but not limited to, those  
9 listed in this section, and maintain a current copy of all applicable certificates, licenses, and proof  
10 of insurance coverages with the program office;

11 (iv) The contractor shall hold a valid and active contractor's registration or license as  
12 applicable pursuant to the provisions of chapter 65 and 65.4 of title 5 in Rhode Island and be free  
13 from disqualifying disciplinary actions taken by the contractor registration licensing board as  
14 determined by the insurance superintendent

15 (v) The contractor shall hold an active IBHS FORTIFIED Roof™ contractor certification  
16 or FORTIFIED professional certification. The contractor is responsible for paying all fees  
17 associated with certification and training;

18 (vi) The contractor shall maintain accurate contact information with the strengthen Rhody  
19 homes program;

20 (vii) The contractor shall agree to follow the strengthen Rhody homes program's  
21 procedures and rules as prescribed by the insurance superintendent;

22 (viii) The contractor shall not have a financial interest in any project funded by the  
23 strengthen Rhody homes program for which they perform work other than receiving payment on  
24 behalf of the homeowner from the strengthen Rhody homes program and shall report to the  
25 strengthen Rhody homes program any potential conflicts of interest before work commences; and

26 (ix) The contractor shall not be the evaluator for any project funded by the strengthen  
27 Rhody homes program.

28 (11) Evaluators:

29 (i) To be eligible to work on a project funded by the strengthen Rhody homes program as  
30 an evaluator, the evaluator shall meet all program requirements including, but not limited to, those  
31 listed below and maintain a current copy of all applicable certificates and licenses with the  
32 strengthen Rhody homes program office;

33 (ii) The evaluator must be in good standing with IBHS and maintain an active IBHS  
34 certification as a FORTIFIED roof evaluator. The evaluator is responsible for paying all fees

1 associated with certification and training;

2 (iii) The evaluator shall agree to follow the strengthen Rhody homes program's procedures  
3 and rules as prescribed by the insurance superintendent;

4 (iv) The evaluator shall maintain accurate contact information with the strengthen Rhody  
5 homes program;

6 (v) The evaluator shall not have any financial interest in any project which they inspect for  
7 designation purposes for the strengthen Rhody homes program;

8 (vi) The evaluator shall not be a contractor or supplier of any materials and/or products or  
9 systems installed in any home they inspect for designation purposes for the strengthen Rhody  
10 homes program;

11 (vii) The evaluator shall not be the sales agent for any home being designated for the  
12 strengthen Rhody homes program; and

13 (viii) The evaluator shall inform the strengthen Rhody homes program of any potential  
14 conflicts of interest.

15 (12) Funding:

16 (i) There is hereby created a revolving fund in the department of business regulation, to be  
17 designated the "strengthen Rhody homes revolving fund". The fund shall be a continuing fund, not  
18 subject to fiscal year limitations, and shall consist of any monies deposited to the fund from the  
19 receipt of federal grants or funds or from other sources of grants or funds. All monies accruing to  
20 the credit of the fund are hereby appropriated and may be budgeted and expended by the insurance  
21 superintendent for the purpose of assisting the strengthen Rhody homes program in performing all  
22 acts that relate to the function and purpose of the strengthen Rhody homes program. The strengthen  
23 Rhody homes revolving fund account shall not be subject to any cost recovery or other assessment  
24 from the state or pursuant to § 35-4-27.

25 (ii) Monies collected pursuant to this act shall be deposited in the strengthen Rhody homes  
26 revolving fund. Monies shall not lapse, unless otherwise specified under federal funding or federal  
27 grant, or a grant or funds from another source, or be transferred to any other state funds and shall  
28 not be utilized for any other purpose

29 SECTION 2. Section 35-4-27 of the General Laws in Chapter 35-4 entitled "State Funds"  
30 is hereby amended to read as follows:

31 **35-4-27. Indirect cost recoveries on restricted receipt accounts.**

32 Indirect cost recoveries of fifteen percent (15%) of cash receipts shall be transferred from  
33 all restricted receipt accounts, to be recorded as general revenues in the general fund. However,  
34 there shall be no transfer from cash receipts with restrictions received exclusively: (1) From

1 contributions from nonprofit charitable organizations; (2) From the assessment of indirect cost-  
2 recovery rates on federal grant funds; or (3) Through transfers from state agencies to the department  
3 of administration for the payment of debt service. These indirect cost recoveries shall be applied to  
4 all accounts, unless prohibited by federal law or regulation, court order, or court settlement. The  
5 following restricted receipt accounts shall not be subject to the provisions of this section:

6 Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
7 HIV Care Grant Drug Rebates  
8 Health System Transformation Project  
9 Rhode Island Statewide Opioid Abatement Account  
10 HCBS Support-ARPA  
11 HCBS Admin Support-ARPA  
12 Department of Human Services  
13 Organ Transplant Fund  
14 Veterans' home — Restricted account  
15 Veterans' home — Resident benefits  
16 Pharmaceutical Rebates Account  
17 Demand Side Management Grants  
18 Veteran's Cemetery Memorial Fund  
19 Donations — New Veterans' Home Construction  
20 Commodity Supplemental Food Program-Claims  
21 Department of Health  
22 Pandemic medications and equipment account  
23 Miscellaneous Donations/Grants from Non-Profits  
24 State Loan Repayment Match  
25 Healthcare Information Technology  
26 Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals  
27 Eleanor Slater non-Medicaid third-party payor account  
28 Hospital Medicare Part D Receipts  
29 RICLAS Group Home Operations  
30 Group Home Facility Improvement Fund  
31 Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
32 Emergency and public communication access account  
33 Department of Environmental Management  
34 National heritage revolving fund

1 Environmental response fund II  
2 Underground storage tanks registration fees  
3 De Coppet Estate Fund  
4 Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission  
5 Historic preservation revolving loan fund  
6 Historic Preservation loan fund — Interest revenue  
7 Department of Public Safety  
8 E-911 Uniform Emergency Telephone System  
9 Forfeited property — Retained  
10 Forfeitures — Federal  
11 Forfeited property — Gambling  
12 Donation — Polygraph and Law Enforcement Training  
13 Rhode Island State Firefighter’s League Training Account  
14 Fire Academy Training Fees Account  
15 Attorney General  
16 Forfeiture of property  
17 Federal forfeitures  
18 Attorney General multi-state account  
19 Forfeited property — Gambling  
20 Department of Administration  
21 Health Insurance Market Integrity Fund  
22 RI Health Benefits Exchange  
23 Information Technology restricted receipt account  
24 Restore and replacement — Insurance coverage  
25 Convention Center Authority rental payments  
26 Investment Receipts — TANS  
27 OPEB System Restricted Receipt Account  
28 Grants Management Administration  
29 Office of Energy Resources  
30 OER Reconciliation Funding  
31 RGGI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council Projects  
32 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Operating and Maintenance Account  
33 Clean Transportation Programs  
34 Department of Housing

1 Housing Resources and Homelessness Restricted Receipt Account  
2 Housing Production Fund  
3 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Fund  
4 Department of Revenue  
5 Car Rental Tax/Surcharge-Warwick Share  
6 DMV Modernization Project  
7 Jobs Tax Credit Redemption Fund  
8 Legislature  
9 Audit of federal assisted programs  
10 Department of Children, Youth and Families  
11 Children's Trust Accounts — SSI  
12 Military Staff  
13 RI Military Family Relief Fund  
14 RI National Guard Counterdrug Program  
15 Treasury  
16 Admin. Expenses — State Retirement System  
17 Retirement — Treasury Investment Options  
18 Defined Contribution — Administration - RR  
19 Violent Crimes Compensation — Refunds  
20 Treasury Research Fellowship  
21 Business Regulation  
22 Banking Division Reimbursement Account  
23 Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Reimbursement Account  
24 Securities Division Reimbursement Account  
25 Commercial Licensing and Racing and Athletics Division Reimbursement Account  
26 Insurance Division Reimbursement Account  
27 [Strengthen Rhody Homes Revolving Fund](#)  
28 Historic Preservation Tax Credit Account  
29 Rhode Island Cannabis Control Commission  
30 Marijuana Trust Fund  
31 Social Equity Assistance Fund  
32 Judiciary  
33 Arbitration Fund Restricted Receipt Account  
34 Third-Party Grants

- 1 RI Judiciary Technology Surcharge Account
- 2 Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- 3 Statewide Student Transportation Services Account
- 4 School for the Deaf Fee-for-Service Account
- 5 School for the Deaf — School Breakfast and Lunch Program
- 6 Davies Career and Technical School Local Education Aid Account
- 7 Davies — National School Breakfast & Lunch Program
- 8 School Construction Services
- 9 Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner
- 10 Tuition Savings Program Fund
- 11 Higher Education and Industry Center
- 12 IGT STEM Scholarships
- 13 Department of Labor and Training
- 14 Job Development Fund
- 15 Contractor Training Restricted Receipt Account
- 16 Workers' Compensation Administrative Account
- 17 Rhode Island Council on the Arts
- 18 Governors' Portrait Donation Fund
- 19 Statewide records management system account
- 20 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO INSURANCE -- WEATHER-RELATED LOSSES

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- 1           This act would provide a framework through which the department of business regulation
- 2   can seek grants to fund a home hardening program.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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