

2022 -- H 7320 SUBSTITUTE A

LC003299/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND REVIEW THE COST AND STATUS OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND OWNED, VACANT, AND ABANDONED PROPERTIES AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR METHODS TO MITIGATE THE ASSOCIATED EXPENSES

Introduced By: Representatives Noret, Casimiro, Corvese, Solomon, Bennett, Batista, Craven, Shanley, Vella-Wilkinson, and Kazarian

Date Introduced: February 02, 2022

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 WHEREAS, "The mortgage foreclosure crisis of the late 2000s created an epidemic of
2 vacant and abandoned properties throughout neighborhoods and cities across the United States"
3 and "Rhode Island, and Providence in particular, were identified as areas 'hardest hit' by the
4 foreclosure crisis at the end of the last decade" according to the U.S. Treasury; and

5 WHEREAS, Vacant properties can include abandoned, boarded-up buildings; unused lots
6 that attract trash and debris; vacant or under-performing commercial properties known as greyfields
7 (such as under-leased shopping malls and strip commercial properties); and neglected industrial
8 properties with environmental contamination known as brownfields; and

9 WHEREAS, Often these structures have been unoccupied for over a year and/or are beyond
10 repair, can pose a serious danger to public safety, and require costly insurance and additional
11 expenses to the State, with that expense growing every year the property remains vacant or
12 abandoned; and

13 WHEREAS, The State must address the increasing number of vacant and abandoned
14 properties, not only because of the negative impact they have on the surrounding community, but
15 because of the numerous costs they impose; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
17 consisting of thirteen (13) members: four (4) of whom shall be members of the House of

1 Representatives, not more than three (3) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
2 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island League of
3 Cities and Towns, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Tax Administrator, or
4 designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island General Treasurer, or designee; one of whom
5 shall be the RI Building Code Commissioner, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of
6 the Department of Administration, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney
7 General, or designee; one of whom shall be a real estate attorney, to be appointed by the Speaker
8 of the House; one of whom shall be a Rhode Island home builder, to be appointed by the Speaker
9 of the House; and one of whom shall be the Chair of the Rhode Island State Properties Committee,
10 or designee.

11 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory
12 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly
13 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of
14 a legislator, provided that the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader of the political party which
15 is entitled to the appointment, consents to the member of the general public.

16 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and review of the
17 costs and status of state owned vacant and abandoned properties and provide recommendations for
18 methods to mitigate the associated expenses including, but not limited to:

- 19 • Summarize the many and varied costs that vacant and abandoned properties impose;
- 20 • Find ways to recapture and assess the value in vacant properties, bringing vitality back to
21 once blighted neighborhoods; and
- 22 • Streamline the approval process for returning tax-delinquent properties to productive use;
23 and

24 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
25 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson.

26 Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

27 The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

28 All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,
29 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable
30 by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

31 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for
32 said commission; and be it further

33 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
34 House of Representatives no later than May 1, 2023, and said commission shall expire on June 30,

1 2023.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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COST AND STATUS OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND OWNED, VACANT, AND
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MITIGATE THE ASSOCIATED EXPENSES

1 This resolution would create a thirteen (13) member special legislative study commission
2 whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations to mitigate the associated costs
3 for State owned vacant and abandoned properties, and who would report back to the House no later
4 than May 1, 2023, and whose life would expire on June 30, 2023.

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