

2022 -- S 2390

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LC004519  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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SENATE RESOLUTION

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: Senators Burke, Valverde, Lawson, Kallman, Euer, F Lombardi, and  
Murray

Date Introduced: February 15, 2022

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

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  
7 greyfields (such as under-leased shopping malls and strip commercial properties); and neglected  
8 industrial properties with environmental contamination known as brownfields; and

9 WHEREAS, Often these structures have been unoccupied for over a year and/or are  
10 beyond repair, can pose a serious danger to public safety, and require costly insurance and  
11 additional expenses to the State, with that expense growing every year the property remains  
12 vacant or 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 Senate, not more  
18 than three (3) from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of

1 whom shall be the Executive Director of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, or  
2 designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Tax Administrator, or designee; one of whom  
3 shall be the Rhode Island General Treasurer, or designee; one of whom shall be the RI Building  
4 Code Commissioner, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of the Department of  
5 Administration, or designee; one of whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney General, or  
6 designee; one of whom shall be a real estate attorney, to be appointed by the President of the  
7 Senate; one of whom shall be a Rhode Island home builder, to be appointed by the President of  
8 the Senate; and one of whom shall be the Chair of the Rhode Island State Properties Committee,  
9 or designee.

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

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

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

24 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at  
25 the call of the President of the Senate 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  
30 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

31 The Joint Committee of Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide  
32 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

- 1 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the
- 2 Senate no later than February 10, 2023, and said commission shall expire on March 21, 2023.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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- 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 Senate no
- 4       later than February 10, 2023, and whose life would expire on March 21, 2023.

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