

# Coastal and Riverine Flood Resilience

2021 Legislative Agenda

## House Bill: H 5124

Sponsored by Representatives Casimiro, Craven, Noret, Donovan, McEntee

## Senate Bill: S 475

Sponsored by Senators Euer and DiMario

## Legislative Explanation

[H 5124](#) and [S 475](#) enables cities and towns to provide a tax exemption to individuals who make structural improvements to their homes located within a flood plain to mitigate flood disasters.

## Issue Background

For the last several years, Congress has failed to negotiate a permanent restructuring of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), while passing eleven short-term flood insurance extensions since 2017. The result is unpredictability for homeowners who reside and/or own homes in high-risk flood areas throughout Rhode Island, and expensive insurance premiums to safeguard properties in designated flood zones. The Rhode Island Association of REALTORS® (RIAR) asked the General Assembly to introduce H 5124 and S 475, as we believe the legislation will be a tool that protects residents from elevated sea level rise in high-risk flood areas, while providing middle-class homeowners with needed tax relief for pre-disaster mitigation.

## Please let your Representatives and Senators Know:

### Homeowners Need Predictability and Tax Relief

- Rhode Island's high number of active flood insurance policies underscores why proactive measures are necessary to mitigate the economic hardships caused by coastal and riverine flooding.
- [H 5124](#) and [S 475](#) could be a mechanism for reducing floods and/or offsetting insurance costs should the NFIP's authorization lapse due to political gridlock in Washington, D.C.

### Cities and Towns Benefit from Proactive Solutions

- A 2019 Providence Journal article referenced estimates made by Columbia University and the First Street Foundation that Rhode Island lost \$44.7 million in real estate appreciation between 2005 and 2017.
- Cities and towns are missing opportunities to collect much-needed property tax revenue to fund infrastructure projects such as upgrading stormwater systems to better manage heavier storm flow and public buildings to decrease energy use.

### Homes and Property Values Must be Preserved

- Rhode Island properties are more susceptible to flood damage and the economic hardships incurred from ignoring the signs, which will eventually impact the entire Rhode Island housing market.
- Proposals like H 5124/S 475 provide tax incentives for homeownership that could sustain property values for the long-term.