



House Bill 7062

AN ACT CONCERNING TEMPORARY SHELTER UNITS FOR PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS OR REFUGEES AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS LOCATED ON REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Testimony of the Department of Administrative Services

Planning and Development Committee

March 10, 2025

Senator Rahman, Representative Kavros DeGraw, Senator Gordon, Representative Zullo, and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **House Bill 7062: An Act Concerning Temporary Shelter Units for Persons Experiencing Homelessness or Refugees and Affordable Housing Developments Located on Real Property Owned by Religious Organizations.**

House Bill 7062 would allow a religious organization to install temporary shelter units on its property. The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) appreciates the legislation's intent and that the proposal includes language that these structures must comply with the state building and fire codes. However, we do have several concerns with the bill as drafted.

DAS's first concern is that this proposal does not adequately define the term "temporary." While the bill prohibits an individual from occupying any such "temporary shelter" for more than 12 consecutive months, it does not define how long the structure can remain erect or whether it must be taken down within 12 months. Failure to include these requirements could lead to circumvention of the building code, as occupants could rotate from one pod to another every 12 months. Without these stipulations, these units would not be considered "temporary" through the lens of the building code, which states that temporary structures cannot be erected for more than 180 consecutive days but rather would be deemed permanent structures, requiring the proper foundation, wind and snow load, and other building and fire safety code-required elements.

Section 1(b)(9) of the proposal requires that there be a minimum of one toilet and one shower for every 8 occupants per gender. The building code allows for one toilet and one shower for every 10 occupants if the units are considered "congregate facilities" or "dorms." DAS recommends changing the number of occupants in this section from 8 to 10 in order to avoid amending the code for this special situation. We also recommend that this section indicate that access to these fixtures should be 24/7 so that individuals are not locked out of a bathroom facility after hours.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. We would be happy to discuss the above concerns with the bill's proponents.