



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 337**

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5505

*House of Representatives, April 1, 2026*

The Committee on Planning and Development reported through REP. KAVROS DEGRAW of the 17th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CERTAIN COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSES FOR THE HOUSING OR SHELTER OF PERSONS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section: (1)  
2 "Commercial warehouse" means any building or structure that (A)  
3 exceeds twenty-five thousand square feet, and (B) is primarily designed  
4 for, or has previously been used for, the importation, storage or  
5 distribution of goods in commerce, (2) "municipality" has the same  
6 meaning as provided in section 7-148 of the general statutes, and (3)  
7 "person" has the same meaning as provided in section 7-148hh of the  
8 general statutes.

9 (b) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any municipal charter,  
10 ordinance, regulation or resolution, any special act or any provision of  
11 the general statutes, no person shall use, operate or permit the use of a  
12 commercial warehouse to house or provide shelter to any individual for  
13 a period exceeding twenty-four hours without first obtaining a permit

14 from the municipality in which such warehouse is located. A  
15 municipality shall designate an officer or board of the municipality to  
16 review any permit application and issue any such permit pursuant to  
17 the provisions of this section.

18 (2) The officer or board designated by the municipality shall hold a  
19 public hearing on any permit application submitted pursuant to  
20 subdivision (1) of this subsection and approve or deny the application  
21 not later than one hundred eighty business days after the submission of  
22 such application. Any such permit applicant shall deliver notice of the  
23 permit application, by certified or registered mail, to each person  
24 appearing of record as an owner of property that abuts the property  
25 upon which the commercial warehouse proposed for use or operation  
26 as housing or shelter is located. Such notice shall be given not later than  
27 three business days after the submission of any permit application  
28 pursuant to this subdivision.

29 (c) No officer or board designated by the municipality pursuant to  
30 subsection (b) of this section shall issue a permit pursuant to this section  
31 unless the applicant demonstrates that each individual to be housed or  
32 sheltered in the commercial warehouse shall have continuous access to:

33 (1) Sanitary restroom and shower facilities;

34 (2) Potable drinking water;

35 (3) Sleeping accommodations, including a bed, cot or elevated  
36 sleeping surface with clean bedding materials, and adequate space to  
37 maintain health and safety;

38 (4) Sufficient heating and cooling systems to maintain a comfortable  
39 indoor temperature; and

40 (5) Storage sufficient to secure personal belongings.

41 (d) No commercial warehouse shall be used or operated as housing  
42 or shelter pursuant to this section unless such commercial warehouse:

43 (1) Complies with the requirements of the State Building Code, Fire  
44 Prevention Code, Fire Safety Code and Public Health Code applicable  
45 to public lodging accommodations; and

46 (2) Provides not less than two hundred square feet of space inside  
47 such warehouse for each individual housed or sheltered in such  
48 warehouse.

49 (e) Following the issuance of a permit pursuant to this section, the  
50 municipality may require that the permit holder provide written  
51 evidence of compliance with this section as long as the commercial  
52 warehouse remains in use or operation as housing or shelter. Evidence  
53 of compliance may be obtained through an inspection of such  
54 warehouse by the municipality, including by the zoning enforcement  
55 officer, any public health official or any code official employed by the  
56 municipality.

57 (f) The officer or board designated by the municipality pursuant to  
58 subsection (b) of this section may revoke or suspend a permit issued  
59 pursuant to this section if the permit holder violates any provision of  
60 this section.

61 (g) A municipality may, by vote of its legislative body or, in a  
62 municipality where the legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of  
63 the board of selectmen, prohibit the issuance of permits for the use or  
64 operation of a commercial warehouse as housing or shelter.

65 (h) Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the use or  
66 operation of a commercial warehouse as housing or shelter (1) in  
67 connection with a declaration of an emergency or a major disaster by  
68 the Governor pursuant to title 28 of the general statutes, (2) for use as a  
69 temporary warming or cooling shelter, (3) if such warehouse has been  
70 converted into a residential property pursuant to section 8-2t of the  
71 general statutes, or (4) if such commercial warehouse was in use as  
72 housing or shelter on or before the effective date of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Subsec. (g), "the issuance of" was added after "prohibit", for clarity.

**PD**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$
All Municipalities	Potential Revenue Gain	Potential	Potential
All Municipalities	Potential Cost	Potential	Potential

**Explanation**

The bill requires anyone planning to use a commercial warehouse to provide shelter or housing that meets certain requirements to obtain a municipal permit and hold a public hearing. This results in a potential revenue gain to municipalities beginning in FY 27 to the extent more municipal permits are issued and fees are collected. The bill also results in a potential cost to municipalities beginning in FY 27 associated with holding a public hearing.

The bill allows municipalities to opt out of requiring these permits via a vote. This eliminates any potential revenue gain to municipalities to the extent they vote to opt out.

**The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of permits issued and public hearings held.

---

**OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 5505**

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CERTAIN COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSES FOR THE HOUSING OR SHELTER OF PERSONS.***

**SUMMARY**

With certain exceptions, this bill requires anyone who plans to use a commercial warehouse for over 24 hours to provide shelter or housing for people to first get a municipal permit. Before issuing a permit, municipalities must hold a public hearing and ensure certain health and safety requirements will be met. But municipalities, by vote of the legislative body or selectmen, can opt to prohibit issuing these permits.

The bill specifically exempts the following housing or sheltering activities from its provisions, including the permitting process:

1. continuing to use a warehouse for housing or shelter if it is being used for that purpose when the bill takes effect,
2. providing housing or shelter after the governor declares an emergency or major disaster,
3. temporarily providing a warming or cooling shelter, or
4. converting commercial buildings into dwellings under a local option zoning regulation that makes the municipality eligible for greyfield revitalization program grants.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**COVERED ENTITIES, STRUCTURES, AND USES**

Regardless of conflicting state laws and local laws and resolutions, the bill prohibits anyone from using a commercial warehouse for more than 24 hours to house or shelter people, unless a local permit is

obtained first or the use is exempt (see above). The bill applies broadly to individuals, legal or business entities, and government agencies and entities subject to state law. The permitting requirement applies to anyone who wants to use, operate, or permit the use of (“use”) a commercial warehouse for housing or sheltering purposes. (Presumably, only one permit is required for each covered warehouse.)

Under the bill, “commercial warehouses” are buildings or structures that are over 25,000 square feet and were primarily designed, or previously used, for importing, storing, or distributing commercial goods.

### **LOCAL PERMIT REQUIRED**

The bill requires anyone covered by the permitting requirement to obtain a permit from the municipality before starting to use a warehouse for housing or sheltering purposes. Each municipality is responsible for designating the individual or board with responsibility for reviewing applications and issuing permits.

As part of the permitting process, the designated officer or board must hold a public hearing. Additionally, within three business days of submitting the application, the applicant must notify each owner of property bordering the warehouse about it by certified or registered mail.

The permitting authority has 180 business days to make a decision after the permit application’s submission.

### ***Required Health and Safety Assurances***

A permit cannot be issued unless the applicant demonstrates that anyone housed or sheltered in the warehouse will have continuous access to:

1. adequate space to maintain health and safety;
2. sanitary restroom and shower facilities and potable drinking water;

3. sleeping accommodations (including a bed, cot, or elevated sleeping surface with clean bedding);
4. sufficient heating and cooling to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature; and
5. sufficient storage to secure personal belongings.

Additionally, the bill requires that these warehouses:

1. comply with the state’s building, fire prevention, fire safety, and public health codes as they apply to public lodging accommodations; and
2. have at least 200 square feet of indoor space for each person housed or sheltered.

**Verification, Inspections, and Permit Revocation**

Municipalities may require anyone with such a permit to submit written evidence that the use continues to comply with the bill’s health and safety requirements. Municipalities (including their code enforcement employees) may verify this by inspecting the warehouse.

The bill allows the local permitting authority to revoke or suspend a permit if the permittee violates the bill’s requirements.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 8 (03/13/2026)