§ 275. Legislative findings. It is hereby declared and found that in cities with a population in excess of one million, large numbers of loft, manufacturing, commercial, institutional, public and community facility buildings have lost, and continue to lose, their tenants to more modern premises; and that the untenanted portions of such buildings constitute a potential housing stock within such cities which is capable, when appropriately altered, of accommodating general residential use, thereby contributing to an alleviation of the housing shortage most severely affecting moderate and middle income families, and of accommodating joint living-work quarters for artists by making readily available space which is physically and economically suitable for use by persons regularly engaged in the arts.

There is a public purpose to be served by making accommodations readily available for joint living-work quarters for artists for the following reasons: persons regularly engaged in the arts require larger amounts of space for the pursuit of their artistic endeavors and for the storage of the materials therefor and of the products thereof than are regularly to be found in dwellings subject to this article; that the financial remunerations to be obtained from pursuit of a career in the arts are generally small; that as a result of such limited financial remuneration persons regularly engaged in the arts generally find it financially impossible to maintain quarters for the pursuit of their artistic endeavors separate and apart from their places of residence; that the cultural life of cities of more than one million persons within this state and of the state as a whole is enhanced by the residence in such cities of large numbers of persons regularly engaged in the arts; that the high cost of land within such cities makes it particularly difficult for persons regularly engaged in the arts to obtain the use of the amounts of space required for their work as aforesaid; and that the residential use of the space is secondary or accessory to the primary use as a place of work.

It is further declared that the legislation governing the alteration of such buildings to accommodate general residential use must of necessity be more restrictive than statutes heretofore in effect, which affected only joint living-work quarters for artists.

It is the intention of this legislation to promulgate statewide minimum standards for all alterations of non-residential buildings to residential use, but the legislature is cognizant that the use of such buildings for residential purposes must be consistent with local zoning ordinances. The legislature further recognizes that it is the role of localities to adopt regulations which will define in further detail the manner in which alterations should be carried out where building types and conditions are peculiar to their local environment.