



Hon. Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chair
House Committee on Corporations
State House
Providence, RI 02903

April 1, 2025

Re: Support for HB 5575; An Act Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers – Long Term Contracting standards for Renewable Energy.

Dear Chair Solomon,

BuildRI is a domestic non-profit trade association comprised of four (4) contractor associations (the Labor Relations Division of the RI Chapter of the Associated General Contractors, the New England Mechanical Contractors' Ass'n, the RI Mason Contractors' Ass'n, and the RI and Southeast MA Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors' Ass'n), and seventeen (17) Local Trade Unions comprised of approximately 10,000 local tradesmen and women. On behalf of our organization, I write to **SUPPORT** the above referred to legislation for the reasons that follow.

BuildRI, and our labor partners, applaud the introduction this legislation, which would establish the framework for Rhode Island's nuclear power infrastructure. With the passage of the Act on Climate initiative, Rhode Island needs to develop new energy networks to support our utility needs. New energy networks like nuclear energy will assist in Rhode Island's efforts to a just transition, not only for our energy consumers, but for the workers in the electric/gas industries.

With Build Rhode Island supports this legislation, we are concerned with the lack of labor standards, which would not only protect the workers tasked with converting the vacant facilities, but the families who will eventually reside there.

First, we ask for this legislation to include the following language:

“To be required to comply with § 37-13-6, and that all contractors and subcontractors performing or assisting in work on the project worksite shall pay their laborers, mechanics, teamsters, other craft members and employees employed under the contract no less than the locally prevailing wage and benefits for corresponding work on similar projects in the state.”

The inclusion of the prevailing wage requirements will ensure highly skilled workers on tasked with building the power plants. These need to be done safely, and ensuring prevailing wage rate on these jobs will attract only the most highly skilled and trained tradesmen and women. Prevailing wage will also ensure all workers will be being paid a good middle-class wage on a publicly owned.

In addition to requiring prevailing wage on these projects, attaching apprenticeship utilization benchmarks will help train the next generation of trades men and women. We ask the following language be included:

“Any project under this chapter shall take all necessary actions to ensure that each contractor and subcontractor involved in alteration projects over five million dollars (\$5,000,000) requires all contractors and subcontractor on the project to have or be affiliated with a non-provisionally approved registered apprenticeship program as defined in 29 CFR et seq. and also require that not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the total hours worked by the contractors' and subcontractors' employees to be completed by apprentices registered in registered apprenticeship programs as defined herein. The awarding agency may lower the fifteen percent (15%) requirement only if it determines in writing that compliance is not feasible or that it would be unduly cost prohibitive to the project.”

And last, we ask for the inclusion of the following language, which would establish the process for large scale conversation (over \$25 million dollars) be built under project labor agreements:

“Proposals for large-scale construction projects, over twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000), shall include a project labor feasibility analysis conducted by the public department, prior to the issuance of a request for proposals, of whether:

(i) The size and complexity of the project indicate that a project labor agreement (PLA) 27 would achieve economy, efficiency, project stability and cost certainty.”

These proposed labor standards will ensure the construction of the nuclear power plants are done by highly skilled and trained workers, and have a ripple effect that will ensure the creation of good paying jobs for Rhode Island families.

Thank you for your attention to this correspondence. Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Cherry
Assistant Executive Director
Build Rhode Island