



## Environment Council of Rhode Island

### Testimony by Peter Trafton, Providence Rhode Island on behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island in Support of H5576

Dear Chair Solomon and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations,  
I write in very strong support of H5576 by Rep Cortvriend and colleagues.

This important and well-crafted bill opens the pathway to development of thermal energy networks as public utilities in our state. It establishes a process for development of rules and regulations for such networks, replaces the use of polluting fossil fuels for the thermal needs of our buildings, and provides an alternative for businesses and workers currently involved in the piped delivery of methane gas. Utilities making the transition from methane gas to thermal energy should obtain equitable cost recovery.

The bill fits into the energy transitions required by the Act on Climate, aligning with climate justice, economic fairness, and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

Workers will be aided in the transition from similar activities with training, transition assistance, and apprenticeships. Pathways established by the bill will lead to well-paid union jobs.

Pilot projects are promoted.

H5576 will provide a new industry for a utility that must leave the processes of gas delivery, to the benefit of many Rhode Islanders.

Please pass this bill this year and help it move forward.

Thanks very much for considering our comments.

Respectfully,

Peter Trafton,  
Co-VP of Policy, Environmental Council of Rhode Island