



Representative Joseph Solomon, Chair

House Corporation Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives

March 19th, 2026

RE: Green Energy Consumers Alliance Supports H7879

Dear Chair Solomon and members of the committee,

On behalf of Green Energy Consumers Alliance and our thousands of members across Rhode Island, **I write in strong support of House Bill 7879** which would direct the utility to identify and evaluate where thermal energy networks can be deployed throughout the state. This legislation also focuses on communities that have historically faced high energy costs and greater exposure to pollution.

The building sector is the second highest emitting sector of Rhode Island's economy yet the state has not developed or adopted a sector-specific decarbonization policies. Thermal energy networks (TENs) are extremely efficient and can serve multiple buildings at a time without providing additional strain on the shared electric grid. These networks can deliver dependable heating and cooling while reducing peak demand on the grid. Importantly, the development of TENs utilizes many of the same skills currently held by the state's legacy energy workforce, ensuring there is a pipeline of work for those individuals as the state transitions to a clean energy future.

Thermal energy networks have benefits beyond decarbonization, they can result in lower long-term energy costs and improve air quality by eliminating the combustion of fossil fuels on site. Development of TENs also provides a more holistic approach towards electrification by supporting a planned, neighborhood-scale transition that maximizes emissions reductions, rather than piecemeal electrification that is currently taking place.

Developing thermal energy networks is critical for building decarbonization in Rhode Island. They represent an opportunity to reduce emissions, ensure a just-transition for workers currently in the legacy energy workforce, and build more equitable, affordable, and resilient energy systems for Rhode Islanders.

Green Energy Consumers Alliance thanks the Committee for the opportunity to testify, and urges passage of H7879.

Sincerely,

Tina Munter, RI Policy Advocate

Green Energy Consumers Alliance

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