

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chairman, House Corporations Committee
Members of the House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02908
HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov

May 5, 2026

Re: Written Testimony in Support of H 8219: Rhode Island Should Address Rising Insurance Premiums and the Insurance Sector's Contribution To the Climate Emergency

Dear Chair Solomon, Vice Chairs O'Brien and Caldwell, and Members of the Committee:

As Attorneys with the Financial Strategies team at the Center for International Environmental Law, we write in support of the *Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act* (H 8219). The proposed legislation addresses the insurance sector's contribution to the climate emergency and is a practical and necessary step towards preserving Rhode Island's insurance market in the face of rising climate threats and extreme weather events.

The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) is a non-profit organization engaged in promoting action by governments, investors, companies, and individuals to plan for and mitigate climate change, including by policy, legislative and judicial action.

Rhode Island's Homeowners and Municipalities face Climate Risk

Globally, we have already passed the 1.5 degree threshold set by the 2016 Paris Agreement. As the planet warms, extreme weather events are becoming increasingly severe and intense. They are also becoming more frequent, and much more costly.

Rhode Island recognized the urgency of the climate crisis as early as the *Climate Risk Reduction Act* of 2010, which acknowledged that “[c]limate change impacts have already arrived in Rhode Island.”¹ In 2018, Rhode Island issued its first-ever comprehensive statewide climate change and coastal resilience plan, the Resilient Rhody plan, which was updated last year.² The state's government has noted that the impacts of climate change, include “[r]ising sea levels and more frequent and intense storms, rain, and snow,” which “cause bigger, more widespread floods along the coast and in our rivers.”³ Rhode Island's four hundred miles of coastline are particularly susceptible to storm surges and rising sea levels.⁴ These costly extreme weather

¹ *Climate Risk Reduction Act* of 2010, R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-84-2.

² *Resilient Rhody 2025*, Department of Environmental Management, <https://climatechange.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur481/files/2026-03/resilient-rhody-2025-full-plan.pdf>

³ Official State of Rhode Island website, *Climate Change - Resilience*, <https://climatechange.ri.gov/resilience>

⁴ *Climate Risk Reduction Act*, *supra* at 1.

events are not limited to coastal Rhode Island but materialize across the State.⁵

The material damages caused by climate change-induced extreme weather events increases by millions of dollars annually.⁶

As well as by enacting the by enacting *Climate Risk Reduction Act*, the Rhode Island legislature has recognized the urgency of addressing climate change, by adopting the *Act on Climate*,⁷ which set emissions reductions goals statewide culminating in net-zero emissions by 2050, and the 2025 *Act on Coasts*,⁸ which concerns resilience costs. The Rhode Island legislature should now address the insurance sector's contribution to the climate emergency by enacting the *Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act*.

The Insurance Sector Contributes to the Climate Emergency

Insurance companies facilitate fossil fuel projects by underwriting expansionary infrastructure projects and extensively investing in fossil fuel assets. Insurance companies have more than \$500 billion invested in fossil fuel related assets.⁹ While insurers profit from the fossil fuel industry, homeowners pay ever-increasing premiums because, at least in part, of the increased risks from wildfires, flooding and other extreme weather events -- increased risks resulting from climate change. Between 2021 and 2024, property insurance costs in Rhode Island increased by 20 percent, outpacing inflation by 7 percent.¹⁰ While homeowners confront increasing insurance costs, the sector continues to increase its profits: The US property and casualty (P&C) industry recorded a \$60.9 billion net underwriting gain in 2025, an increase of nearly \$40 billion from the \$22.1 billion gain generated in 2024.¹¹

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Steven M. Rothstein and Christopher S. Stark, *RI Homeowners Need a Plan to Prepare for Climate Change Impacts | Opinion*, The Providence Journal, April 4, 2026. <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/opinion/columns/2026/04/04/ri-homeowners-need-a-plan-to-prepare-for-impacts-of-climate-change-opinion/89253183007>. See also Alex Kuffner, *As storms track further inland, they'll cause more wind damage in RI. Here's where*. The Providence Journal, February 27, 2023. <https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/environment/2023/02/27/climate-change-in-rhode-island-means-stronger-hurricanes-and-more-wind-damage/69935703007>.

⁷ *2021 Act on Climate*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-6.2.

⁸ *Act on Coasts*, R.I. Gen. Laws § 46-23.4.

⁹ Persefoni, Ceres Accelerator for Sustainable Capital Markets, *The Sustainability Institute by ERM, Changing Climate for the Insurance Sector: Research and Insights* (August 2023), at 4. <https://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/changing-climate-insurance-industry>.

¹⁰ Sharon Cornelissen & Douglas Heller, *Overburdened The Dramatic Increase in Homeowners Insurance Premiums and its Impacts on American Homeowners*, Consumer Federation of America (April 2025), at 13. <https://consumerfed.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/OverburdenedReport.pdf>

¹¹ Kassandra Jimenez-Sanchez, *US P&C industry achieved higher underwriting profit in 2025: AM Best*, Reinsurance News, March 24, 2026. <https://www.reinsurancene.ws/us-pc-industry-achieved-higher-underwriting-profit-in-2025-am-best>.

The *Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act* - H 8219

The proposed *Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act* addresses the contribution of the insurance sector to the climate emergency. If enacted, the legislation will require insurers phase out their existing fossil fuel underwriting and their investments in the fossil fuel sector by 2035. The Bill also prohibits new fossil fuel investments and the underwriting of new fossil fuel projects. Importantly, the proposed legislation also provides for the non-renewal of policies and restricts the withdrawal of an insurer from the State.

This bill provides a pathway to align the insurance sector with the State's climate priorities as expressed in previous legislation and the government's adaptation and mitigation policies. Most importantly, enacting the *Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act* is in the interests of the State's residents.

We urge you to support the *Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act*.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Charles Slidders
Manager and Senior Attorney, Financial Strategies, Center for International Environmental Law



Conor MacDonald
Attorney, Financial Strategies, Center for International Environmental Law