

May 5, 2026

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

RE: NECSEMA Opposition to H.8219 – Rhode Island Insurance Market Protection Act

Dear Members of the House Committee on Corporations:

The New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association (NECSEMA) represents convenience stores and gasoline retailers, independent transportation fuel distributors, and the businesses which supply them. NECSEMA members own, operate and/or supply the majority of the 550 convenience stores in Rhode Island. Our members are a significant contributor to Rhode Island's economy, employing over 8,800 people and remitting over \$750 million to the state's tax coffers annually. We play a crucial role in the state's commercial landscape, providing essential goods and services to residents, generating employment opportunities, and contributing to the overall prosperity of local communities.

NECSEMA respectfully submits this testimony in opposition to H. 8219. H.8219 would restrict access to insurance for fuel retailers, distributors, and energy marketers by forcing insurers to phase out underwriting for fossil fuel-related businesses. Insurance is a fundamental requirement for operating fuel terminals, transportation fleets, and retail locations.

Rhode Island residents would see significant financial impacts from this legislation. Average gasoline prices in Rhode Island have ranged between approximately \$3.25 and \$4.39 per gallon in recent months while home heating oil prices have averaged roughly \$3.00–\$4.50 per gallon depending on seasonal demand. Fuel prices have recently been impacted significantly due to turmoil in the Strait of Hormuz, which has hurt consumers as well as wholesalers and retailers.

Even modest increases in insurance costs can translate into several cents per gallon at the pump and significantly higher winter heating bills. For a typical Rhode Island household consuming 700–900 gallons of heating oil annually, even a \$0.25 increase per gallon would result in an additional \$175–\$225 per year in energy costs.

The state relies on an extensive network of fuel infrastructure, including terminals, pipelines, and more than 435 retail gas stations. Policies that restrict insurance availability threaten the stability of this system and risk supply disruptions, particularly during periods of

peak demand such as winter.

Small, family-owned fuel retailers will be disproportionately impacted. Unlike large corporations, these businesses have limited ability to absorb rising costs or secure alternative coverage, increasing the risk of market consolidation and reduced consumer choice.

While NECSEMA supports efforts to reduce emissions, H.8219 takes a punitive approach that undermines energy reliability and increases costs for consumers without offering a practical transition strategy.

For these reasons, NECSEMA respectfully urges the Committee to oppose H.8219. Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Brennan".

Peter A. Brennan, Esq