



March 21, 2024

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chairman
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H 7617 An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Decarbonization Act of 2024 and H 7782 An Act Relating to Health and Safety – The Rhode Island Clean Heat Standard Act

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Office of Energy Resources (OER) the opportunity to comment on H 7617 and H 7782, both of which seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings.

The most recent Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Inventory covering calendar year 2020 determined that approximately 27.3% of Rhode Island's GHG emissions are the result of residential heating (19.3%) and commercial heating (8.0%). Taken together, this represents the second largest source of GHG emissions after transportation (38.0%). Without making significant progress reducing emissions from the heating/thermal sector, Rhode Island will not be able to meet the GHG emissions reduction mandates included in the Act on Climate. DEM and OER look forward to working collaboratively with the bill sponsors and the entire General Assembly to continue implementation of the Act on Climate.

With historic federal investments from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), DEM and OER will have the opportunity to develop programs to address GHG emissions from buildings. We believe this is the first step in tackling building decarbonization and look forward to successful implementation of these programs.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to work with you to address the issues raised in this letter. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of Legislative Affairs, at ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov and Karen Bradbury, OER Administrator of Energy Legislation & Programs, at karen.bradbury@energy.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

Christopher Kearns
Acting Energy Commissioner

cc: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
The Honorable Rebecca Kislak
The Honorable Terri Cortvriend
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director