

Testimony in support of House Bill 5424, House Environment Committee Feb. 27, 2025.
by Peter Trafton, Providence Rhode Island

Dear Chair Bennett and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I write with strong support for 5424, Rep Boylan's and colleagues' bill to create a Climate Superfund Act for Rhode Island.

As the State of Vermont developed the first such program, now being challenged by producers, and as New York, with the second such program, currently being challenged by other states, who want to ride the coattails of polluting producers who happen to be located in their states, I have been watching and learning about Climate Superfunds.

These laws hold polluters responsible for the environmental damage they've caused from climate change related to their greenhouse gas emissions. The goal is to shift the costs of climate change adaptation from taxpayers to the companies that have contributed the most to climate change. This is the same approach that similar environmental laws have followed for years, "the polluter must pay". For too many decades the externalities of greenhouse gas pollution have been passed on to all of us by the polluters as they go running off to reward their shareholders (and of course themselves).

We must change their behavior; we must make them pay. I don't think it will be easy. Lots of lawyers will be involved, but that seems to be the way challenging changes occur. It is good for Rhode Island to be marching along with our colleagues states. As a Conservation Law Foundation supporter, and member of their Rhode Island Advisory Board, I strongly support Rhode Island's climate Superfund.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PG Trafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first and last names being more prominent.

Peter G. Trafton, M.D.