



February 27, 2025

The Honorable David A. Bennett, Chairman
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H.5424, An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Rhode Island Climate
Superfund Act of 2025

Dear Chairman Bennett,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition are writing in opposition to House bill 5424 which proposes assessing fossil fuel companies an undetermined amount to pay for state and local climate change planning.

While the legislation states the responsible parties shall pay proportional amounts, “based on widely accepted peer-reviewed allocation analyses”, the potential dollars owed are not known. What we do know, is that if the General Assembly enacts this bill it will drive up already high costs to consumers, both at the pump and in their utility bills. We do not believe you can impose millions of dollars of liabilities on businesses and not expect that to be passed onto consumers.

At a time when affordability is top of mind given a winter with colder than average temperatures and much higher utility costs, this bill will have the effect of driving up the cost of energy. And, of course, since our entire economy relies on fossil fuels, when their prices go up, so does the cost of food, goods and services, housing, and everything else that is dependent on fossil fuels. Again, at a time when businesses and residents are already dealing with increased costs in these items as well.

In 2021, the General Assembly passed the Act on Climate, charging the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) with developing a plan for reaching the mandatory greenhouse gas emissions targets outlined in the Act. A considerable amount of work is being done to transition to renewable energy sources to meet the climate goals set by the Act. This important work must continue, however it is also clear that this transition will be challenging and cause disruption to businesses and residents in our state.

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

If we are concerned about climate change, and we should be, and if we want to ensure that have policies to lead us to a decarbonized future, we need policies that promote and incentivize new technologies and that lead to a cleaner energy future where energy remains affordable and reliable.

While we support the transition to renewable energy where warranted by economics and adequacy of supply and recognize its importance for environmental sustainability, we are concerned that this legislation will place significant burdens on our businesses and residents at a time when they are already struggling with increased energy costs.

This is one of several pieces of legislation introduced this session that while directed at a specific industry will have significant impacts on the cost of doing business for all Rhode Island employers.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this issue. We ask the Committee not to support H.5424.

Sincerely,

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce

National Federation of Independent Business

Rhode Island Business Group on Health

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association

Rhode Island Staffing Association

Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Subcommittee

Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Environment and Natural Resources Committee members