



Representative Bennett, Chair

House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives

March 12th, 2025

RE: Green Energy Consumers Alliance Supports House Bill 5425

Dear Chair Bennett and members of the committee,

On behalf of Green Energy Consumers Alliance and our thousands of members across Rhode Island, **I write in strong support of House Bill 5425**, which would require the State Division of Planning in conjunction with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Office of Energy Resources to prepare an environmental and energy checklist for all state construction projects that exceed \$10,000,000. This bill would further help the state be a leader in efficient design and model how new construction can be comfortable and cost-effective, while achieving project and facility usage goals.

Energy Efficiency Reduces Building Operation Cost

Implementing energy efficiency measures in buildings can reduce the operating cost of buildings because those measures can reduce the amount of energy needed to heat or cool a building, and tools like smart thermostats can support enrollment in demand response programs sponsored by Rhode Island Energy to further manage energy usage. H5425 would create a checklist that would, among other things, consider energy efficiency of the facility and present value costs, savings, and comparisons for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems during the design and construction phases of a facility. Evaluating these areas prior to the construction of a facility allows for more thorough planning and potential construction cost savings. Considering these factors also results in the facility using less energy overall from the start, which can make future retrofits easier and provides for a more efficient use of financial resources.

The Impact of Buildings on Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Large buildings in Rhode Island are one of the top emitting sectors for greenhouse gasses (GHG) in the state GHG inventory. Thorough planning of state facilities that accounts for energy efficiency and HVAC systems can identify areas where emissions can be reduced, and energy demand can be lowered. That has many benefits including lower strain on our energy grid and a cleaner environment. H5425 would also address facility intentions to use efficient, renewable, or alternative energy sources in the project, allowing for planning of rooftop solar panels or battery storage systems to be done. These distributed energy resources would further reduce strain on the electric grid and increase state production of clean energy, in line with our climate goals.

Conclusion

In order to achieve requirements of the Act on Climate, we must implement policies that promote energy efficiency and leadership in energy and environmental design, especially for state construction projects. Buildings are a large component of the state's greenhouse gas emissions, and

developing a checklist to review pertinent energy related measures will ensure that new buildings address efficiency and potential for renewable energy installations prior to construction.

Green Energy Consumers Alliance thanks Representative Handy for introducing this important legislation and urges the Committee and full General Assembly to vote in favor of its passage.

Sincerely,

Tina Munter, RI Policy Advocate

Green Energy Consumers Alliance

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