



**Champion Advocacy
Associates**

March 12, 2025

The Honorable David Bennett
House Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Bennett and Committee Members,

The Northern RI Chamber of Commerce (NRICC) represents businesses in the communities of Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield and Woonsocket. The Chamber opposes the passage of H.5493, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Decarbonization Act. While the time may come for this bill to be enacted, many agencies are in the process of collecting valuable information that is needed to plan a transition to renewable fuels while doing the least amount of harm to the Rhode Island economy in the process. The Chamber believes the General Assembly needs all of the data prior to moving forward.

H.5493 bans municipalities from issuing a permit for the construction or alteration of any commercial, residential, or mixed-use buildings if the initial application is submitted after December 31, 2025 and if the building is not made “electric ready.” Electric ready means the building is designed with sufficient capacity for a future retrofit of a mixed-fuel building to an all-electric building, including space, drainage, electrical conductors, etc. It also creates a public facing benchmarking system to guide the EC4 and Office of Energy Resources in determining future mandates on commercial energy use.

According to the Energy Information Agency, in December, 2024, the average price of electricity for a commercial user in Rhode Island was the 2nd highest in the country (24.08 c/kw), behind Hawaii (38.29 c/kw).¹ For industrial users, Rhode Island had the 2nd highest rate in the country (20.41 c/kwh) – second, again, only to Hawaii (32.92 c/kwh). H.5493 recognizes that electric and natural gas companies may incur additional costs while assisting building owners in their reporting requirements under this legislation. The costs can be passed on to the customers, further increasing the cost of electricity. Rhode Island continues to struggle to compete with other states to attract businesses, and their jobs. We must be careful about increasing energy costs for these entities and losing our ability to attract good paying jobs.

¹ Energy Information Agency. Average Price of Electricity to Ultimate Customers by End User
https://www.eia.gov/electricity/monthly/epm_table_grapher.php?t=epmt_5_6_a

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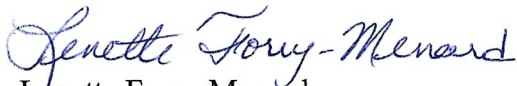
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Rhode Island has greenhouse emission reduction requirements it must meet due to the passage of the 2021 Act on Climate. We urge the committee to allow the state agencies to perform all of their due diligence concerning options available to meet the new state law, along with cost data and energy supply data so that all of the Rhode Island public will understand where we are going, why, and what to expect as we transform into a green energy economy. Transparency throughout this process is paramount. While well-meaning, the passage of H.5493 gets too far ahead of the hard work that is underway at this time.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to working with the sponsor on this issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lenette Forry-Menard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lenette Forry-Menard
Legislative Lobbyist