



March 12, 2025

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

Re: H.5493, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Decarbonization Act of 2025

Dear Chairman Bennett:

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition would like to draw attention to H.5493 An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Decarbonization Act of 2025. 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.

In addition, last year the General Assembly tasked the EC4 with recommending approaches to implementing energy benchmarking and performance standards for large public and private buildings. In its final report issued on February 10, the EC4 highlights several issues the Coalition believes are important when considering H.5493.

Among the issues the report raises are the following:

- There is no comprehensive database of large buildings or their current energy sources in the state, and creating such a database of covered buildings would be a time-intensive process.
- The lack of both data on large buildings and infrastructure for automated energy-use reporting prevents the effective evaluation and implementation of statewide benchmarking and performance standards for large municipal and private buildings.
- In contrast, a program applying to certain large state-owned and state-occupied buildings does not hinge on the availability of such data and infrastructure. OER finds that such a program applying to only large state-owned and state-occupied buildings could be implemented beginning as soon as FY26 with just one additional full-time employee.

Based on the above findings as well as several additional factors outlined in its report, the EC4 report recommends the Office of Energy Resources (OER) “focus on leading a program for certain large state-owned and state-occupied buildings that would lay the foundation for future expansion to large municipal and private buildings”.

In his FY2026 budget submission, Governor McKee proposed a state facility benchmarking and performance standard program along with a new full-time employee in OER to manage this initiative.

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

Based on the above findings, the Coalition recommends waiting to act on H.5493 and follow the recommendations of the EC4 report on Building Energy Benchmarking and Performance Standards.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on H.5493.

Sincerely,

Associated Builders and Contractors – Rhode Island

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

National Federation of Independent Business

Propane Gas Association of New England

Rhode Island Business Group on Health

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association

Rhode Island Marine Trade Association

Rhode Island Staffing Association

Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Committee

Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Environment and Natural Resources Committee