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March 11, 2026

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

Dear Chairman Bennett and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce (NRICC), which represents businesses in Burrillville, Central Falls, Cumberland, Foster, Glocester, Johnston, Lincoln, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Scituate, Smithfield, and Woonsocket, I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to H.7183, An Act Relating to Building Benchmarking and Reporting Act of 2026.

H.7183 creates a new statute – Chapter 27.5 – to facilitate an energy reporting requirement for residential, commercial and industrial buildings with twenty-five thousand gross square feet or more. The bill requires businesses to provide the following information to the Office of Energy Resources (OER) on an annual basis: property address, primary use, gross floor area, annual energy use, source of energy use, annual greenhouse gas emissions, and a statement of compliance or noncompliance with the statute. Buildings with 50,000 sq ft or more begin reporting May 15, 2028. Buildings between 25,000 – 49,999 sq. ft. begin reporting May 15, 2030. Exemptions are available for vacant buildings, buildings possessing a demolition permit and buildings with no energy services provided.

Once the information is gathered, OER is required to collect the data and to post building specific information on its website, as well as “Progress against baseline year data for intervening years for both energy use and greenhouse gas emissions.” H.7183, under the enforcement provision, allows OER to withhold grants and Infrastructure Bank monies from buildings that fail to comply with reporting requirements or “*decarbonization efforts*.” No other sections of the bill provide OER with the ability to implement decarbonization requirements based on the results of the benchmarking reports, but the authority is implied.

Requiring commercial and industrial building energy-use data to be posted on a publicly accessible government website could create unintended risks and burdens for businesses. Public disclosure of detailed energy consumption information may expose sensitive operational data that competitors could use to infer production levels, operating hours, or other proprietary business practices. In addition, publishing building performance metrics without



context may unfairly portray certain properties as inefficient, even when factors such as building age, tenant mix, manufacturing activity, or extended operating hours drive higher energy use. This could negatively impact a business's reputation, property value, leasing potential, and relationships with customers or investors. For many businesses, particularly those operating in older facilities common throughout Rhode Island, publicly posting this information may create competitive disadvantages without providing meaningful insight into the steps companies are already taking to improve efficiency.

Finally, the bill could unintentionally slow redevelopment and revitalization projects. Property owners considering improvements to aging buildings may delay or cancel renovation projects if doing so would trigger additional reporting requirements or expensive compliance obligations.

For these reasons, the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce respectfully urges the Committee to oppose H.7183.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Monika Zuluaga". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Monika" and last name "Zuluaga" clearly legible.

Monika P. Zuluaga
President & CEO