



March 11, 2026

The Honorable David A. Bennett, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HOUSE BILL 7183 – AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- BUILDING BENCHMARKING AND REPORTING ACT OF 2026

Chair Bennett and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we are writing to respectfully express our opposition to House Bill 7183, which proposes the establishment of an energy and water benchmarking program for large buildings in Rhode Island and sets energy performance standards.

The League fully supports efforts to enhance energy efficiency and sustainability across our communities. We recognize the importance of setting clear benchmarks to improve energy and water performance, reduce costs, and advance Rhode Island's net-zero mandate. However, we believe that the approach outlined in House Bill 7183 is premature given the model already proposed under the Governor's budget.

For example, under the Governor's proposed budget (House Budget Bill 7126, Article 3, Section 16), voluntary energy benchmarking for public buildings over 25,000 square feet is paired with state-provided technical and financial support, a model that the League strongly supports and recommends as best practice. Programs like this provide a balanced approach that allows municipalities to participate in statewide energy efficiency initiatives without diverting scarce local resources from essential services.

We urge the General Assembly to allow programs like this to guide statewide efforts before enacting new mandatory benchmarking requirements. Doing so will enable municipalities to assess the impact, feasibility, and resource needs associated with such initiatives while ensuring consistency with Rhode Island's broader sustainability goals.

We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and welcome the opportunity to collaborate on solutions that balance environmental responsibility with municipal feasibility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Environment and Natural Resources Committee