

March 11, 2026

Subject: In Favor of H-7184 Building Performance Standards Act of 2026

Dear House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

As a Rhode Islander, member of Climate Action Rhode Island (CARI), and Architectural Green Building Consultant, I am writing in support of the H-7184 Building Performance Standards Act of 2026.

Imagine you have a bad neighbor. Or maybe you don't have to imagine? Maybe they're loud late at night, or shine lights right in your windows, or don't clean up after their dog. These actions are annoying and affect others, but ultimately have a relatively small impact. Now imagine your neighbor is also one of the largest businesses in the state and is accounting for a significant percentage of the state's carbon emissions. They may be operating in an older building that is so leaky they are heating the outside more than the inside. Not only does this cost the owner money that could be spent in the local economy, but it also contributes to worsening environmental conditions that affect all of their neighbors. We have noise ordinances already; we **need** building performance standards for large buildings in Rhode Island.

This Building Performance Standards Act allows owners to choose from several ways to reduce emissions, including weatherization and transitioning to alternative mechanical systems such as heat pumps. By providing options, owners have the ability to customize their approach to save on their own utility bills and help their neighbors. This type of guidance is long overdue in a state that desperately needs to reduce carbon emissions in buildings and get utility costs under control.

Some may hesitate because improvements to buildings cost money. However, for every \$1 spent in the local economy, energy efficiency generates 57¢- 84¢ more economic activity than does payment of energy bills (see the EPA's [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-03/documents/table\\_rules\\_of\\_thumb.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-03/documents/table_rules_of_thumb.pdf)). If the concern is the Rhode Island economy, we should be putting the money where it will be most effective at helping both people and businesses.

Ultimately, we need to address building performance as soon as possible, and this act will help us make that happen.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Emily Totten