



March 11, 2026

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

Re: H.7183, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Benchmarking and Reporting Act of 2026
H.7184, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Performance Standards Act of 2026
H.7484, An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Buildings Carbon Emissions Reduction Act

Dear Chairman Bennett:

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition would like to draw attention to House Bills 7183, 7184, and 7484. These bills would implement reporting and energy benchmarking requirements on private and municipal buildings across our state.

House Bill 7183 would require municipal and private buildings of more than 50,000 square feet to input their energy benchmarking data no later than May 2028. Buildings with 25,000 square feet are required to begin benchmarking no later than two years later.

H.7184 would establish a statewide program requiring buildings with more than 25,000 square feet to meet energy-efficiency and greenhouse-gas reduction standards in order to help the state achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 under the Act on Climate.

Lastly, House Bill 7484 would require certain large development projects to analyze and report the carbon emissions associated with the project before receiving a building permit.

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, in 2024 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 of last year, the EC4 highlights several issues the Coalition believes are important when considering these bills.

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

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

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”.

The Coalition recommends following the recommendations of the EC4 report on Building Energy Benchmarking and Performance Standards prior to moving forward with additional statewide reporting and enforcement requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on these pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,

David Chenevert, Chairman, Rhode Island Business Coalition

Associated Builders and Contractors – Rhode Island Chapter

Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Rhode Island

National Federation of Independent Business

Rhode Island Bankers Association

Rhode Island Builders Association

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Committee

Rhode Island Small Business Summit Tax and Budget Committee

Rhode Island Staffing Association

cc. House Environment and Natural Resources Committee