

## **Trafton testimony in support of H7184. House Environment Committee March 11, 2026**

Dear Chair Bennett and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

I'm Peter Trafton of Providence Rhode Island. Since retiring from my career as a trauma surgeon in 2015, I have devoted much of my time and energy toward protecting our future generations from the ravages of climate change. This inevitably leads to the fact that our burning of fossil fuels is the cause of global warming. The gases in our atmosphere produced by burning methane and petroleum products retain more heat than the earth radiates, and so we get hotter and hotter. We have the answer – stop burning fossil fuels, as soon as possible. Here in Rhode Island, where we must import our costly fossil fuels, we fortunately have ample renewable energy, offshore wind especially and also solar. We must switch to them. And it turns out this offers a great additional benefit – renewable energy is turning out to be far less expensive than fossil fuels – a great boon for our state's economy, if we can only take advantage of it.

Our buildings require heat when it's cold, and we like our food cooked and our showers warm. We buy our gas and oil from away. We don't have to pay for sun and wind, just the systems to turn them into usable energy, and those we create and service in state, providing work and income for Rhode Islanders. Furthermore, they offer greater efficiency than deriving our energy from burning gas and oil, processes that waste much of the heat produced.

So, we need to reduce and replace our use of fossil energy, lots of which goes to our buildings, especially the larger buildings of Rhode Island. H7184, the Building Performance Standards Act, is the next step after benchmarking. It will help us gradually and progressively make the changes necessary to cease use of fossil fuels and move securely and economically into the use of renewable energy. We must do this. We must start the process now as it will take many years. Failure to start this transition now will burden our children and grandchildren forever.

You know about this bill. We've been trying to pass it for several years. Now is a most appropriate time, as we worry not only about climate change but the costs of energy in our state. Please help us pass this essential part of our transition to far better and less expensive energy. Further stalling this legislation is standing in the way of a far better future for Rhode Island.

Thanks very much for considering my support for H 7184, the Building performance act of 2026.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Trafton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Trafton