



For a thriving New England

CLF Rhode Island 235 Promenade Street
Suite 560, Mailbox 28
Providence, RI 02908
P: 401.351.1102
F: 401.351.1130
www.clf.org

Via Electronic Mail

March 11, 2026

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources
House Lounge, State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: CLF Supports House Bill No. 8132 – Decarbonization Demonstration Initiative
Act of 2026

Dear Chair Bennett:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 8132, which addresses the need to reduce greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions from existing large, multi-unit residential buildings by promoting the use of geothermal heat pump systems to heat and cool large residential buildings.

Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization working throughout New England to counter climate change, restore the health of our oceans, embolden new energy infrastructure, and safeguard health, quality of life, and economic prosperity for future generations. We are working to reduce emissions, address the climate crisis, and push for affordable and equitable energy policies in Rhode Island and across New England.

As H-8132 states, a principal barrier to the adoption of geothermal systems is the cost and financial risk associated with obtaining detailed, site-specific feasibility proposals. Reducing this barrier through a feasibility-first financing approach will accelerate informed investment decisions, advance compliance with the Act on Climate, and generate data to support future decarbonization policy.

Thermal energy (which literally exists under the very ground we walk on) offers a free, plentiful, renewable, non-intermittent source of energy with the potential to substantially reduce GHG emissions in Rhode Island. Our neighboring state of Massachusetts is already several steps ahead of Rhode Island in harnessing non-polluting, abundant thermal energy:

- In 2024, the non-profit Home Energy Efficiency Team, Inc. (“HEET”) in conjunction with the State of Massachusetts, the Town of Framingham, and Eversource completed a

geothermal energy network in Framingham that included the retrofit of a large, multi-unit, affordable housing complex operated by the Framingham Housing Authority.¹

- On September 17, 2025, NSTAR Gas Company d/b/a Eversource Energy (“Company” or “NSTAR Gas”) filed with the Department of Public Utilities (“Department”) a petition for approval of a regulatory framework for networked geothermal services.— D.P.U. 25-86. “More specifically, the Petition seeks “to establish a decisional platform to enable the Department’s consideration of networked geothermal services that would be extended to new construction projects in the Company’s service territory, such as new residential housing developments or other larger-scale developments with energy needs that would be suited to a network solution other than natural gas distribution service.”²

H-8132 is a common sense, low-cost approach for advancing decarbonization measures for large residential buildings in Rhode Island. Acquiring the up-front seed money required to determine the feasibility of a geothermal energy conversion for a large residential building is one of the most difficult hurdles in the redevelopment process. However, if the feasibility study concludes that the building will achieve substantial, long-term cost savings as a result of this retrofit, follow-on capital from private and non-governmental sources is much easier to raise.

Compared to the sizable health, social, and economic benefits that will inure to Rhode Island residents – many of whom are in a precarious financial position due to rising utility bills – the cost to Rhode Island to implement H-8132 is very modest and is exactly the leading role Rhode Island should be taking in decarbonizing our buildings.

We therefore ask that you pass House Bill No. 8132.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Stang
Senior Attorney, Rhode Island
Conservation Law Foundation

¹ Geothermal Pilot Reference Guide, <https://www.eversource.com/residential/save-money-energy/clean-energy-options/geothermal-energy/geothermal-pilot-reference-guide> (last accessed Mar. 11, 2026).

² Petition to Intervene of Home Energy Efficiency Team, Inc., February 17, 2026; <https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/V3.1.0/FileService.Api/file//aeiieghfe?so4lnDySwMHqRHpP3Qz6I7397esR9cO9SRd3olvwD+PcSxI+bIU344Khxm+qpOeg0hKFj9M9l/xQR8+/8GqPvdGgrFe6XR6ngIfa80wd3rxFD8G4j981M2Rna9aVTXA>.



cc: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Representative John Edwards
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation