

To the members of the House Committee on the Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Amanda Babson, I am a resident of Narragansett, I work in the field of climate adaptation and I am submitting testimony in my personal capacity in support of H7004 the Rhode Island Climate Superfund Act of 2026. Rhode Island is already seeing many impacts of climate change, and is a leader in some areas of climate adaptation, but many of these efforts are in initial planning stages and we do not have the capacity or the funding to implement. The projected future climate impacts are growing and become more expensive. Climate adaptation requires involved planning, flexible solutions, expensive implementation and hard choices of when we let go valued resources.

I provided comments on the Resilient Rhody plan, which has major challenges in how we are able to fund the priority actions in the plan. H7004 is a smart way to pursue funding for this plan and the many climate adaptation needs municipalities, tribal governments and community organizations need to begin implementing now. The bill holds the fossil fuel producers responsible for the damages they are imposing on Rhode Islanders.

As a resident of Narragansett, I am very fortunate to enjoy the benefits of coastal Rhode Island, from kayaking in the salt ponds and swimming at the beach, to eating at waterfront restaurants and biking and driving over roads and trails, that are all increasingly vulnerable to sea level rise caused by fossil fuels. I pay extra taxes to maintain and upgrade public infrastructure to recover from storm impacts that climate change has made more expensive. I pay extra for flood insurance for my home and have had to add a higher capacity sump pump and air conditioning to my home to adapt to increased heavy precipitation events and extreme heat. It's important to me that our communities and fellow Rhode Islanders who may not be able to afford to take personal adaptation action and are not as aware of the climate threats to our state are also prepared. It's high time we start requiring the fossil fuel polluters to pay their fair share of the costs that the state and municipalities will need to pay and this bill is a sensible way to do that.

Sincerely,
Amanda Babson
Narragansett, RI