



March 25, 2026

Honorable David A. Bennett
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill No. 7004-- Oppose

Dear Chair Bennett and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity for [Consumer Energy Alliance](#) (CEA) to provide comments in opposition to House Bill 7004.

Established in 2006, CEA is a nonpartisan consumer advocacy organization representing virtually every sector of the US economy—from the iron and steel industry to truckers, airlines, agriculture, labor unions, restaurants, chemical manufacturers, small businesses, and families nationwide. Our [members](#) support a commonsense, all-of-the-above energy policy that delivers affordable, reliable, and cleaner energy to families and businesses.

CEA has a long record of [supporting](#) energy diversity through expanding the thoughtful use of renewable energy and innovation. We believe it is vital for policymakers to understand the importance that energy costs have on the finances of families and local businesses. Along with affordability and reliability, we believe policymakers must also fully consider environmental stewardship when developing sound energy policies.

With this in mind, we urge this Committee to carefully consider the negative impact policies like those in House Bill 7004, as currently drafted, would have on families, particularly those living near and below the poverty line, as well as businesses in the state. The fees imposed in these bills will almost certainly be embedded in the costs Rhode Islander's pay for energy. Just how much is uncertain, but an analysis¹ by the United States Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Legal Reform projected the annual costs of similar legislation to Massachusetts households to be between **\$276** and **\$20,682**—depending on the size of the fee imposed.

While Rhode Island consumers have heavily invested in energy efficiency, solar energy, and heat pumps, the state remains heavily reliant on the very resources being penalized in the bills. According to the US Energy Information Administration, over 80% of Ocean State homes and businesses are heated with natural gas and other petroleum products. Rhode Island drivers, [97% of whom](#) drive vehicles power by gasoline or diesel, [consumed](#) over 8 million barrels of gasoline and [over](#) 26 million barrels of diesel and heating oil. Additionally, approximately [87% of the electricity generated](#) in the state was produced by generators fueled by natural gas.

¹ <https://instituteforlegalreform.com/blog/retroactive-penalties-a-huge-new-expense-for-massachusetts-households/>



As is too often the case when it comes to energy policy Rhode Island's most vulnerable citizens, who already suffer from some of the highest costs of living² in the country, will be most heavily impacted by House Bill 7004.

The hard truth is that passing this bill will artificially raise energy costs – making it more difficult to provide energy assistance to those who need it most. At a time when energy affordability is a front-burner issue, this committee cannot have it both ways. It cannot be concerned about affordability while imposing a de facto tax on the very products Rhode Islanders use for transportation and to power their homes and businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Brown", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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² <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/cost-of-living-index-by-state>