

Lou Mansolillo

From: Stephen Porder <stephenporder@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2026 8:21 PM
To: House Corporations Committee; Rep. Bennett, David A.; Rep. Phillips, Robert D.; Rep. Carson, Lauren H.; Rep. Boylan, Jennifer; Rep. Cortvriend, Terri-Denise; Rep. Fogarty, Kathleen A.; Rep. Handy, Arthur; Rep. Kislak, Rebecca M.; Rep. Knight, Jason; Rep. McEntee, Carol Hagan; Rep. McGaw, Michelle E.; Rep. Nardone, George A.; Rep. Santucci, Paul M.; Rep. Speakman, June; Rep. Spears, Tina L.; Rep. Ajello, Edith H.
Subject: Re: support for H7081

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Dear Chair Bennett and honorable members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Stephen Porder and I live in Providence (02906). I also served as Brown's Associate Provost for Sustainability and led their decarbonization efforts, including the initial phases of Brown's plan to eliminate fossil fuel combustion from all buildings on campus and to transition to a campus heated entirely by heat pumps run on renewable electricity by 2040. I also had the privilege of testifying before many of you in January on the path to a net-zero emissions future. **I'm writing now to urge your strong support for the Next Generation Public Buildings Act, H7081.**

This bill prohibits the use of combustion-based heating for air or water in any new construction or major renovation of a public building. As an expert in sustainability science and the transition to a greenhouse gas emissions-free future, I can testify that **there is no credible path for RI to meet the goals of the Act on Climate without taking this step.** Ending on-site combustion of fossil fuels for space and water heating is the way forward. I also know **it is technologically, economically and logistically feasible.** I undertook the same (small scale) project in my 1920's house in 2014, and helped start the process for Brown's 200 building, 7 million square foot campus (a project that will take until 2040). As this latter example illustrates, the transition will take a lot of time and effort, and starting with State Buildings makes complete sense. It's the kind of leadership the state needs if we are going to uphold our legal obligations and achieve our ambitious climate and affordability goals. **Please pass this bill out of committee and to the House floor with a recommendation for passage.**

Sincerely,

Stephen Porder (Ph.D, Acacia Professor of Ecology, Evolutionary and Organismal Biology and Environment and Society, Brown University; title included for identification only. All views expressed are mine alone and do not reflect in any way on those of Brown University).

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Stephen Porder
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