

April 9, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairman, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

RE: H-5477 & S-174 – Joint Resolution Making An Appropriation To Establish A Statewide Main Street Coordinating Program

Dear Chairman Abney and Chairman DiPalma:

Rhode Island Energy appreciates the opportunity to express support for H-5477 and S-174 which would establish a statewide “Main Street Rhode Island” pilot program managed by Grow Smart RI as the coordinating entity through Main Street America.

Main Streets are gathering places that support small businesses and bring communities together. Statewide Main Street Coordinating programs provide the structure and framework necessary for local, often volunteer-led efforts to effectively grow, activate, beautify, and promote downtowns and neighborhood centers as vibrant, attractive destinations for visitors, residents, developers, and businesses. A statewide program would coordinate training and communication, allowing for collaboration, sharing of best practices, and the pursuit of outside and private funding to sustain ongoing local capacity.

Rhode Island’s many place-based community groups will make greater progress both individually and together through a connected and professionally managed network. This network will align economic development with a clean energy transition, supporting the State’s climate and energy goals. Sustainable, vibrant downtowns align climate action and visible economic growth. This will also allow initiatives such as Rhode Island Energy’s energy efficiency program to more effectively connect with local businesses, property owners and residents.

The proposed three-year pilot allows ample opportunity to demonstrate the program’s value and effectiveness. Grow Smart RI has a 26-year track record of convening a wide variety of partners and stakeholders to catalyze action. It is a well-known and well-respected statewide leader and effective advocate for sustainable and equitable economic development and other initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration and continued leadership.

Respectfully,



Nicholas S. Ucci
Director of Government Affairs

CC: The Honorable Arthur Handy, Rhode Island House of Representatives
The Honorable Lori Urso, Rhode Island Senate