



Jeanine Silversmith
On Behalf of the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association
In Support of H-7125
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR EDUCATION -- STATEWIDE
REFERENDUM
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 17, 2022

The Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) supports H-7125, and respectfully urges its passage.

The impact of school buildings on student health and academic performance as well as attendance, concentration, and motivation, is well documented. This school construction proposal will continue the momentum of investing in school buildings so all of Rhode Island's students are safe and prepared to learn.

The RIEEA membership includes over 150 individuals including youth and students as well as more than 50 organizations¹ including Save The Bay, Audubon Society of Rhode Island, University of Rhode Island's Guiding Education in Math and Science Network, the Rhode Island Conservation Districts, Rhode Island College, and South Kingstown Land Trust. RIEEA's mission is to promote and support environmental education to increase the environmental literacy of all Rhode Islanders.

Education is often overlooked as one of the best ways to address the climate crisis and other environmental issues. In fact, strengthening climate education and engagement was identified by scientists as one of six key societal transformations needed to address the climate crisis in a recent paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences². I am pleased that H-7125 specifically incentivizes early childhood education, career and technical education, STEAM facilities, and apprenticeship programs. In addition, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects provide exciting opportunities for teachers and students to use their school building as a teaching tool.

I encourage you to pass this important legislation.

¹ <http://rieea.org/organizational-members/>

² <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/5/2354>