

Testimony of Susan Kelley

On Behalf of Climate Action Rhode Island

In support of

H-7125

House Committee on Finance

Thursday, February 17, 2022

To the Members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing in strong support of H-7125, the school construction proposal that will allow correction of building deficiencies that are making our children, our teachers, our workers, and our planet sick. Since the 2018 \$250 million plan passed, much positive work has been done to improve our schools, but much work remains to be done.

If approved, H-7125 will provide money to support many more school projects, to provide incentive funding for early childhood education, STEAM facilities, and health and safety improvements.

Equally important to Climate Action Rhode Island members, this legislation will provide incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements so that Rhode Island can, through this legislation and other bills, meet the Act on Climate 2030 benchmark.

The air our children breathe has a significant impact on their educational performance. Air pollution adds significant health risks to our children's lives and to their ability to perform. Damages can include premature death, asthma, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and developmental problems, none of which will allow for our children's best performance (<https://www.lung.org/blog/air-pollutions-top-10-health-risks>). Classrooms with energy efficient HVAC systems and mold-free walls and ceilings are the least we should provide for Rhode Island students. Moreover, approval and implementation of H1725 could reduce emissions by 105, 913 metric tons of CO₂, which would be good for all Rhode Island citizens.

International report after international report foretells the effects of an over-heated Earth on all of us (see the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's February 16, 2022 Report on Rising Seas, for example), Act on Climate requires that our legislature does all it can to prevent climate disaster in Rhode Island by making certain the state reaches net zero by 2030. H7125 provides a necessary arena, our children's school lives, by which we can work to achieve that goal.

I ask you to support H7125.

Sincerely yours,

Sue Kelley
Member, Climate Action Rhode Island Legislative Team
199 Jordan Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910
304-694-1317
Skelley1236@gmail.com