



March 5, 2025

The Honorable Chair Representative Arthur J. Corvese
Chair, House Labor Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Opposition to H.5679 – PAYMENT OF WAGES

Dear Chair Corvese and Members of the House Labor Committee,

The Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA) represents local, family-owned businesses in the lumber and building materials (LBM) industry, along with associated manufacturers and distributors. In Rhode Island, our membership includes the Rhode Island Lumber & Building Materials Dealers Association (RILBMDA), which represents over 20 member locations. The LBM industry in Rhode Island employs more than 3,000 residents, offering good-paying jobs with long-term career pathways.

Our members are key suppliers to the state's housing and construction industry, providing the essential materials that builders and contractors rely on. Additionally, through our educational foundation, we invest heavily in workforce development, offering industry-recognized certifications and training for crane operators, forklift drivers, and building materials specialists, among many other careers.

While we support wage transparency and fair labor practices, H 5679 would add yet another administrative and compliance burden on small businesses, increasing operating costs without a clear benefit to employees. Rhode Island businesses already follow detailed wage reporting requirements under state and federal law. The additional recordkeeping mandates in this legislation create new administrative expenses, which are particularly challenging for small, family-owned businesses with limited resources. Many of our members operate with lean administrative teams, and every additional regulatory requirement forces them to spend more time on compliance rather than running their business.

The cost of housing and construction is a well-known challenge in Rhode Island. Regulations that increase costs for suppliers, distributors, and builders ultimately make housing less affordable for residents. While H 5679's compliance costs may not be overwhelming on their own, they are part of a larger pattern of incremental regulatory burdens that drive up prices for consumers. These cumulative costs, when applied across multiple sectors, make it more difficult to address the state's affordability crisis.

We appreciate the committee's time and consideration of this issue. H 5679 is well-intended, but it adds to the growing regulatory burden on businesses that are already working hard to remain competitive in a challenging economy. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to reconsider advancing this bill and to work toward policies that support both employees and local businesses while keeping costs manageable for Rhode Island consumers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Francis Palasieski

Francis Palasieski

Director of Government Affairs

Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA)

fpalasieski@nrla.org

Direct Line: 518-880-6376 | nrla.org