



March 27, 2026

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Associated Builders and Contractors of Rhode Island (ABC RI), I write to express our opposition to House Bill H 7963. While we appreciate the intent to streamline oversight, this legislation raises significant concerns regarding competition, workforce access, and the overall cost and delivery of construction projects across our state.

H 7963 proposes to transfer the regulation of telecommunications contractors to the State Board of Examiners of Electricians. While this may appear to be an administrative change, it has far-reaching implications for contractors, project owners, and Rhode Island's construction workforce.

First, the bill creates a strong likelihood of scope-of-work expansion and overlap, which could blur the lines between electrical and telecommunications work. This creates uncertainty in the field, increases the potential for jurisdictional disputes, and risks limiting opportunities for telecommunications contractors who specialize in low-voltage and data systems.

Second, the legislation may increase barriers to entry, particularly for small and mid-sized merit shop contractors. By placing telecommunications professionals under a more rigid electrical licensing framework, the bill could introduce additional licensing requirements, training mandates, and compliance obligations that many firms are not currently structured to meet. This will discourage participation and reduce the number of qualified contractors available to perform this work.

Third, H 7963 will likely increase costs and administrative burdens. Contractors may be required to obtain new licenses, retrain employees, and navigate a new regulatory structure. These added costs will ultimately be passed on to project owners and taxpayers, particularly on public works projects where cost efficiency is critical.

Additionally, the transition to a new regulatory framework risks workforce disruption and project delays. Contractors and workers may face uncertainty during the transition period, potentially limiting the availability of qualified personnel and slowing project delivery.

Finally, placing telecommunications under a board historically focused on electrical work raises concerns about balanced representation and fair oversight. While the bill includes a telecommunications representative, the structure still risks disproportionately favoring one segment of the industry over another.

Rhode Island's construction industry depends on open competition, clear scope definitions, and accessible workforce pathways. H 7963, as currently written, moves in the opposite direction by introducing uncertainty, increasing costs, and potentially reducing competition.

For these reasons, ABC RI respectfully urges the Committee to oppose House Bill H 7963 or, at a minimum, consider amendments that preserve competition, protect existing telecommunications contractors, and ensure a fair and balanced regulatory structure.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph P Lopes MBA  
President  
Associated Builders and Contractors of Rhode Island