



2021 – H 5717 OPPOSE

The National Utility Contractors Association of Rhode Island (NUCARI) is an association of utility construction and excavation professionals working throughout Rhode Island and southern New England. Our works include water, sewer, roads, bridges, commercial and residential projects. The work that our member companies do provides critical services to every one of our fellow Rhode Islanders, infuses millions of dollars into the Rhode Island economy, and creates quality, lasting, good-paying jobs. Our member companies represent a multitude of Rhode Island small businesses and employ construction workers, laborers, utility contractors, operating engineers, service providers, professionals and suppliers.

The mission of NUCARI is to provide professional development, promote safety awareness, and advocate for initiatives that keep our crews working to improve Rhode Island's aging underground infrastructure.

It is incumbent upon NUCARI to provide testimony upon legislation currently before this committee, specifically H-5717.

NUCARI opposes 2021 – H-5717 in its present form. While NUCARI supports MBE contract compliance and the notion of prioritizing contract awards to Rhode Island based companies, we oppose the proposed removal of women from the definition of minority as it relates to Minority Business Enterprise. It is widely acknowledged that women have been historically marginalized and are often unjustly underrepresented in the business community, and even more so in the construction industry. As an association, we have seen great participation of woman-owned MBEs in construction through this program. This has resulted in an increased number of successful woman-owned construction companies in the state, in turn creating more jobs and increasing contributions to the state economy. It has also increased participation of women in the industry, allowing for more women to obtain quality, high-paying jobs in construction. To remove women from the definition of minority in this context would stifle the progress that has been made in diversifying the construction industry.

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