



April 22, 2025

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chairman  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H.5375, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Lead Poisoning Prevention Act

Dear Chairman Casey,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition are writing in opposition to House bill 5375 which proposes amendments to the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act.

We recognize the health risks posed by lead in drinking water and commend efforts the General Assembly has taken over the past few years to improve public safety and provide funding to replace lead water pipes. However, we are concerned that the current version of H.5375 imposes an undue burden on private property owners regarding their relationship with tenants of their properties.

This legislation would allow municipalities to adopt ordinances providing water suppliers or agents of the municipality or supplier to enter properties to perform a lead service line replacement. While the bill states at least seventy-two hours must be provided to enter the property, it also states if the Department of Health determines an emergency exists, they can enter the property at any time.

In addition, the bill states that tenants of properties can request and schedule a private side lead service line replacement if for some reason a property owner who is eligible for a free lead service line is unresponsive for some reason. The legislation does not clarify what unresponsive means or the amount of time provided to respond to any such request.

Allowing a municipality, a water supplier or their agent to enter onto private property to replace lead pipes could create an untenable situation without coordination with the owner, tenants and others responsible for the property of water service disruption, additional liability and review of the quality of work.

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

For these reasons, we ask the Committee to reconsider the provisions of this bill that could result in unintended consequences. While addressing lead contamination is crucial, the approach proposed in H.5375 may not be the most effective or equitable way to protect public health.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this issue. We ask the Committee not to support H.5375.

Sincerely,

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Rhode Island Business Group on Health

Rhode Island Hospitality Association

Rhode Island Lumber and Building Materials Dealers Association

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association

Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Subcommittee

Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Municipal Government and Housing Committee members