

Dawn Huntley

From: EcoQuiet Admins <admin@ecoquietlawn care.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:07 PM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Subject: More input for h7150

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From George Carrette from Smithfield ri of Ecoquiet Lawn Care llc I am personally not a huge fan of bans, but at the same time a ban on a ban also seems a bit funny to me. Our blowers eliminate all point source pollution and the fact is even if you used a coal fired power plant it would burn cleaner than a fuel oil mixed backpack blower.

Furthermore, I often compete with gasoline landscaping companies on price and I rarely have anyone say I'm more than 10-25% more expensive and sometimes end up being cheaper so I really think it is more or less a wash.

I understand it is kinda scary at first, but the idea that you would need 5000 lbs of batteries is insane. I have ten employees. I wouldn't have a business if they had to load and unload 50000 lbs of batteries in and out a truck. Please be wary of some of the things you hear about this subject. I have been in it for 12 years and there is a lot of bad info out there from people who have never done what I have done.

Thank you,

George Carrette
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From: EcoQuiet Admins <admin@ecoquietlawn care.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 5:32 PM
To: House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Subject: H7150 testimony

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Prioritizing Real Affordability: My Story as a Smithfield Homeowner and Entrepreneur

Hello, my name is George Carrette. I'm a resident of Smithfield, Rhode Island, and as a new homeowner, I'm constantly watching every dollar when it comes to affordability. Just last year, I closed on my first home here, excited but quickly hit with the realities of property taxes, home upgrades, and running my small landscaping business. While House Bill 7150 aims to stop municipalities from banning gas-powered landscaping equipment, I haven't seen much enforcement of existing local fuel bans in my day-to-day work. They haven't driven up my costs or made operations restrictive—instead, they've been a gentle nudge, signaling to entrepreneurs like me that there's growing demand for eco-friendly tools and practices. Customers are asking for electric mowers and leaf blowers more often, and it's an opportunity, not a burden. To truly help families like mine, we need bolder action on bigger cost drivers like runaway property taxes and unnecessary fees.

I urge Representative Gregory Costantino, the sponsor of H7150, and Senate President Dominick Ruggerio, along with key committee members like Senator Stephen Archambault, to shift focus to these systemic reforms.

My Take on the Bigger Affordability Wins

Property Taxes Eating into My Paycheck

As a new Smithfield homeowner, my biggest shock was the property tax bill—it's grown faster than my income or inflation. Rhode Island currently caps levy increases at 4%, but imagine if taxes on homes like mine (valued under \$750,000) were tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), averaging about 2.5% annually over the last 20 years. For a typical \$5,000 tax bill in 2004:

- **At 4% growth:** Today, it'd be around **10,955**—that's over \$5,900 more than necessary.
- **At a 2.5% CPI cap:** Just **8,193**, saving me and neighbors **2,762** this year alone.

Over 20 years, that's **tens of thousands** per household, freeing up money for mortgages, kids' activities, or my business reinvestments. Capping at inflation for primary homes under \$750k would make homeownership sustainable for folks like me.

My Heat Pump Headache: Fees Canceling Incentives

When I installed a heat pump in my new Smithfield home to cut energy bills, I got a great \$1,600 state rebate—thank you for that! But then I had to pay a building permit fee that ate into those savings. It felt like the left hand giving and the right taking back. Why charge me upfront for upgrades we're incentivizing? Waiving permit fees on first-time applications would supercharge jobs in construction and HVAC, boost incomes for workers like my crew, and let homeowners like me improve our properties without the red tape penalty. It's a win for affordability and my electric bill.

Occupational Licensing: A Regressive Wall for My Business

Rhode Island ranks in the **top 10 most burdensome states** for occupational licensing fees and requirements, per the Institute for Justice—especially regressive for small operators like my landscaping startup. These flat fees hit entrepreneurs harder than big firms: a \$200 license renewal might be pocket change for a corporate chain but a month's marketing budget for me. They're a hidden tax on starting up, keeping wages low and prices high for customers. Reforming this would let more folks enter trades, driving competition and lowering costs across the board.

My F-150 Lightning's \$2,600 Nightmare

I drive a Ford F-150 Lightning for work—great truck, but when the headlight failed, I got hit with a **\$2,600** quote because Ford locks the programming software behind dealership walls. No independent shop or DIY fix allowed; I had to tow it in and pay premium labor. Right to Repair laws would force manufacturers to share parts, tools, and codes, slashing these monopolized costs. For EV owners like me, it's not just inconvenient—it's a budget killer that makes "going green" feel punitive.

Excessive Training Hours Holding Back Safe Workers

Rhode Island demands far more licensing hours than neighbors with equal or better safety records. For landscapers and related trades:

- **RI:** Up to 1,000+ hours for some certifications.
- **New Hampshire:** Often half that (500 hours), with lower injury rates per OSHA data.
- **Vermont:** Similar flexibility, superior worker safety stats.

I've seen qualified crew members sidelined by our hours while competitors across the border hire faster. Streamlining to match top safety states would get people working sooner, without risks.



My Call to Action

Fellow Rhode Islanders, H7150 is a distraction—landscaping bans aren't the affordability villain. Let's make real change: CPI tax caps, permit waivers, licensing audits, Right to Repair, and hour reforms. Rep. Costantino and Sen. Archambault, I've reached out to your offices—let's chat about my stories and build a truly affordable RI.

Embracing Electric: My All-Electric Landscaping Business Thrives Despite Fuel Bans

Hello, my name is George Carrette. I'm a proud resident of Smithfield, Rhode Island, a new homeowner, and the owner of an **all-electric landscaping company**. Affordability keeps me up at night—balancing homeownership costs with growing my business—but I've turned challenges into opportunities. While House Bill 7150 would block municipalities from banning gas-powered landscaping equipment, I've seen zero enforcement of existing local fuel bans in my operations. Honestly, it hasn't hurt us at all; we've gone **fully electric** with mowers, blowers, and trimmers voluntarily, and our costs haven't spiked. Customers love the quiet, zero-emissions service, and it's a competitive edge—proving these "bans" are really just a market signal for eco-friendly innovation that entrepreneurs like me can embrace. The real affordability killers? Runaway taxes and fees hitting my family and bottom line.

I call on Representative Gregory Costantino (H7150 sponsor), Senate President Dominick Ruggerio, and Senator Stephen Archambault to prioritize these proven reforms over symbolic equipment fights.

My Personal Affordability Battles—and Solutions

Property Taxes Crushing New Homeowners Like Me

Buying my Smithfield home was a dream, but the tax bill woke me up fast. With our 4% levy cap outpacing inflation (CPI averaged 2.5% over 20 years), a \$5,000 bill from 2004 would now be **10,955**—versus just **8,193** under a CPI cap for homes under \$750,000. That's ****2,762** saved* annually* for my household, letting me invest in my electric fleet instead of just covering basic s. This tiered cap for primary residences is essential.**

My Heat Pump Install: Incentives vs. Fees

Upgrading my home with a heat pump slashed my energy costs, and the \$1,600 rebate was awesome. But the building permit fee? It clawed back real value. As a business owner hiring local crews, I see how waiving first-time permit fees would spark jobs, incentivize green builds, and make upgrades like mine frictionless—boosting incomes without government "gotchas."

Licensing Fees: Regressive Roadblocks for My Startup

Rhode Island's occupational licensing ranks us in the **top 10 worst** nationally (Institute for Justice), with fees acting as a flat tax that's brutal on small, all-electric outfits like mine. Big competitors absorb them; I scrape to renew while hiring. It's regressive, stifling entry-level workers and hiking service prices—reform would unleash entrepreneurs.

F-150 Lightning Repair Rip-Off

My electric F-150 Lightning hauls gear perfectly, but a bum headlight? **\$2,600** at the dealer, thanks to locked software. No indie shop fix for me. Right to Repair would open access to parts and codes, saving EV business owners like me thousands and keeping fleets affordable.

Overkill Training Hours in Landscaping Trades

We mandate excessive hours—1,000+ for key certs—vs. New Hampshire's 500 (with better OSHA safety stats) or Vermont's flexible model. My crew could expand faster without barriers, maintaining top safety while serving more Smithfield yards.



From My Yard to Yours: Let's Act

Running an all-electric landscaping company shows fuel bans aren't the boogeyman—they're optional progress. Reps Costantino, Ruggerio, and Archambault, connect with me: CPI tax caps, permit waivers, licensing cuts, Right to Repair, and hour alignments. These changes would supercharge RI families and businesses like mine.

Thank you,

George Carrette

Founder & CEO

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