



RIEEA

Rhode Island Environmental
Education Association

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On Behalf of the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association

In Support of H-7246 – LONG TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

House Committee on State Government & Elections

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

The Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) supports H-7246, and respectfully urges its passage.

Adding climate change, sea-level rise, and coastal resiliency to the analysis of data developing Rhode Island's economic development policy is essential and overdue. Virtual every industry and profession in Rhode Island is changing, and it is critical that we prepare our workforce—and our emerging workforce—with the skills and knowledge to address the impacts of this changing climate. The commissioner of elementary and secondary education and commissioner of higher education sit on the economic development planning council, and we must be sure that they can inform the economic development policy from an education perspective.

Education is often overlooked as one of the best ways to address the climate crisis and other environmental issues. In fact, strengthening climate education and engagement was identified by scientists as one of six key societal transformations needed to address the climate crisis in a recent paper in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences¹.

The RIEEA membership includes more than 60 organizations² including Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Save The Bay, the Rhode Island Conservation Districts, and Rhode Island College as well as hundreds of 200 individuals including youth and

¹ <https://www.pnas.org/content/117/5/2354>

² <https://www.rieea.org/about-us/organizational-members/>

students. RIEEA's membership and supporters care deeply about Rhode Island's natural places, health, and economic stability. I encourage you to pass this important legislation.