



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

April 16, 2026

The Honorable V. Susan Sosnowski, Chair
Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony in Support of S2218 Building Performance Standards Act of 2026

Dear Chair Sosnowski and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The City of Providence thanks Senator Kallman for sponsoring Senate Bill 2218 and her leadership.

The City of Providence supports Senate Bill 2218, which would develop a standard for building emissions to enable large building owners across the state to decrease their carbon footprints in line with the Act On Climate. S2218 would accelerate the energy efficiency and electrification needed across the building sector to prepare Rhode Island for a healthier and climate resilient future. The proposed legislation is critical to economic growth, public health, and the environment.

The Act On Climate requires that the state reduces emissions to 45% below 1990 levels by 2030. The building sector, as stressed in the state's 2025 Climate Strategy Plan, is a critical target for carbon emission reductions. Senate Bill 2260, a building energy benchmarking requirement, is the first most effective and foundational strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from large buildings. Energy benchmarking will empower individual building owners to make informed, data-driven strategies to reduce their building's energy use – the City of Providence knows this from experience. In aggregate, reported data will inform the building energy use standard for buildings, as proposed in S2218, throughout the state and ensure that the state reduces emissions to be in compliance with the Act On Climate. Cities and towns can play a critical role toward meeting this target with state support and direction.

The City of Providence has been leading by example, but the reality is that Providence cannot do this alone. Mayor Smiley signed into law the Building Energy Reporting Ordinance (BERO) Program on November 8, 2023, recognizing it an essential cornerstone to implement the City's Climate Justice Plan and our pledge as a Climate Jobs City. Buildings account for the majority of the City's carbon emissions—roughly 79.2% based on Providence's 2021 Inventory of Citywide Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Given Providence's priority to decarbonize the building sector, we have taken active steps towards advancing electrification and phasing out fossil fuels in buildings with our BERO program, and in March 2024, we enacted the Energy Efficiency and Carbon Neutral Ordinance, which requires carbon

neutrality for all city-owned buildings by 2040. Last week we released our Decarbonization Roadmap to establish a clear pathway for phasing out fossil fuels from 130 city-owned buildings over the next 14 years. This will transform how we power, heat, and cool and operate our buildings and achieve a 64% reduction in the City's energy use. The Decarbonization Roadmap creates a guide for phasing out fossil fuels from City buildings by 2040, a goal the City knows is achievable, despite federal program roll backs. It identifies building energy upgrades that can help safeguard the resiliency of community centered spaces, the prosperity of our local economy, and the path to energy affordability by changing how we power, heat, and cool, and operate our buildings

Building performance standards play a critical, complementary role to building energy benchmarking, and in the State's ability to meet Act On Climate mandates and provide tangible economic and environmental benefits of emissions reductions for the health of our communities. The City of Providence strongly supports the passage of Senate Bills 2218.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Priscilla De La Cruz
Director of Sustainability