



April 15, 2026

The Honorable Susan Sosnowski
Chair, Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 2218

Dear Chair Sosnowski, Vice Chair Britto, Secretary Vargas, and Distinguished Committee Members,

Rhode Island and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 2218, *An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Performance Standards Act of 2026*. This bill would establish building energy performance standards for large buildings.

Senate Bill 2218 would require all large buildings to comply with undefined building energy performance standards to be established by OER and DEM. Rhode Island has one of the oldest housing stocks in the country, so many of the structures covered by this bill would likely require significant investments to achieve the proposed standards. Most larger developments in Rhode Island are required to have separate electric meters for each unit, so while property owners would be responsible for making the required improvements, they would benefit little from the cost savings that would result from those improvements. With federal energy efficiency programs facing an uncertain future, the cost of those investments would likely be passed along to tenants who are already facing serious housing cost burdens.

RIHousing supports the goal of improving the energy efficiency of the state’s housing supply and encouraging the use of renewable energy. For the housing we finance, RIHousing has established strong energy efficiency design and construction standards, and we prioritize developments that incorporate renewable energy, are all electric or meet zero energy or passive house standards. RIHousing has also partnered with the Office of Energy Resources (OER) and Rhode Island Energy to fund the Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS) program which finances the development of affordable, energy-efficient homes with zero net energy consumption.

We respectfully submit that the move toward more energy-efficient, sustainable housing should be approached thoughtfully, with a full understanding of the associated costs and practical challenges, and with strategies in place to limit the impact on both renters and property owners. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this legislation and welcome continued dialogue on the most effective path forward for addressing this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Ventura".

Carol Ventura
Executive Director