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Rhode Island Works Best When We Say **UNION YES.**

April 15, 2026

Chair Susan Sosnowski
Senate Environment and Agriculture
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony in Support of SB2218

Dear Chair Sosnowski and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO representing 80,000 union members and 275 affiliated local unions, I write in support of Senate Bill 2218 the Building Performance Standards Act. This bill directs OER to establish energy efficiency and reduction targets for buildings over 25,000 square feet.

Our building sector accounts for roughly 30% of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. By establishing a measured program that starts with all large buildings, over 25,000 square feet, we are ensuring a long-term pipeline of work for skilled union tradespeople in energy efficiency, HVAC, electrical, mechanical, and building operations. These are not just jobs, they are long-term, career-sustaining opportunities that provide high wages, strong benefits, and a pathway to the middle class.

As this program takes shape and additional state climate mandates quickly approach, significant infrastructure improvements will be necessary to remain in compliance with emissions reduction targets through 2050. This will require ongoing upgrades, retrofits, and energy-efficient improvements to both public and private facilities.

This is a structured investment that guarantees stable, long-term employment opportunities for union members while making our state buildings more cost-efficient and sustainable. For those reasons, I urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 2218 and I thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 401-751-7100.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Erica A. Hammond'.

Erica A. Hammond
Legislative Director, Rhode Island AFL-CIO

