



## Audubon Society of Rhode Island

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Maxwell McFarland, Director of Advocacy  
Audubon Society of Rhode Island

### **RE: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2529 — Next Generation Public Buildings Act**

Dear Chairwoman Sosnowski and Members of the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee,

On behalf of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, representing 17,000 members and supporters – one of Rhode Island’s largest land trusts stewarding nearly 10,000 acres for people, birds, and wildlife – I urge you to support S2529.

Audubon’s mission integrates conservation, education, and advocacy to safeguard Rhode Island’s natural systems and the communities that depend on them. The Next Generation Public Buildings Act proposes three important requirements for public buildings that will protect those same natural systems, our climate, and our communities. Public buildings, open to the public, commencing in new construction, renovation and replacement of a value in excess of fifty percent, and any extension or increase in floor area, number of stories or height, commencing after January 1, 2028, must:

- 1) Prohibit combustion-based heating for air and water
- 2) Comply with the 2021 Act on Climate, to the extent feasible
- 3) Meet Rhode Island’s State Building Code, including the 2024 IECC

S2529 ensures that Rhode Island is advancing statutory climate obligations, no longer delaying these responsibilities, when undergoing major renovations and new constructions for public buildings across the state. Reducing on-site pollution, improving indoor air quality, and accelerated adoption of electrification are just some of the beneficial byproducts that the Next Generation Public Buildings Act will bring if passed.

Audubon has worked to implement our own climate-responsible infrastructure and buildings through our RePower Audubon campaign. Through our own installation of electric heat pumps and investment in solar power, we are advocating for this bill as it brings the same principled, measurable pathway to decarbonizing public buildings. We urge the Committee to recommend passage on S2529 so that Rhode Island and its cities can lead by example on climate solutions.

Regards,  
Maxwell McFarland, Director of Advocacy

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