



May 21, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: S.2248, An Act Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers – Duties of Utilities and Carriers

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition oppose the passage of S.2248, An Act Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers – Duties of Utilities and Carriers.

This legislation requires the Public Utilities Commission (RIPUC) to review and approve a tiered rate system for residential electric and natural gas customers. The program is designed to assist households with incomes at or below 150% of the federal poverty level. Each tier would provide a discount on utility costs such that the household would not pay more than 3% of its income on utility costs if electric is not the source of heating for the residence, and 6% of the income if the residence utilizes electricity as a primary heat source.

While we appreciate the desire to provide financial assistance to low-income households, H.7880 pays for the program by shifting the cost of the discounts and related administrative costs to the remaining ratepayers.

According to the US Energy Information Administration as of September 2025, Rhode Island had the highest commercial rate for natural gas in New England and 2nd highest in the country at \$22.11 per thousand cubic feet. On a kWh basis Rhode Island had the largest increase in commercial electric pricing between 2023 and 2024 when the rate went from 19.27 to 22.97 and was the second highest rate in the nation behind Hawaii.

Transferring even more rate costs to other residential, commercial and industrial users places a higher burden on those sectors, decreases the incentive for those entities to switch to electricity for other activities, and further hinders our ability to attract businesses and jobs to the state.

For these reasons, the Coalition opposes the passage of S.2248.

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Associated Builders and Contractors – Rhode Island Chapter

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

National Federation of Independent Business

Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

Propane Gas Association of New England

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Subcommittee

Rhode Island Small Business Summit Tax and Budget Committee

Rhode Island Staffing Association

cc. Senate Finance Committee members