

March 19, 2024

Representative Bennett, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
Re: Support for H7617 – The Building Decarbonization Act

Dear Chair Bennett and members of the Committee,
My name is Amanda Babson and I am a resident of Narragansett, RI. I am writing to express my support for H7617 the Building Decarbonization Act, as a much needed way to reduce emissions from both existing buildings and new construction in RI. With buildings making up 30% of all GHG emissions in the state, this legislation is an essential step in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and achieving the Act on Climate goals.

The Building Benchmarking & Performance Improvement section is a critical step in addressing emissions from large existing buildings because we can't reach our targets if we don't have the baseline data to inform our actions. By requiring large buildings to report their energy usage to the state, the Office of Energy Resources can then establish emissions reductions standards in line with the Act on Climate law. In a small state such as Rhode Island, it makes the most sense to implement these policies in a consistent statewide manner.

The Phase in of All-electric New Construction section tackles emissions from new construction by phasing in requirements for all-electric new construction. We cannot continue to make the problem worse by building with fossil fuel equipment, which is designed to last 20 years, but ends up often locking homeowners in for longer. All-electric new construction is better for our climate, our health, and our economy.

As a homeowner, I've been able able to make investments to electrify my home and make it more energy efficient. I've had a heat pump and induction stove for two years now and solar panels for seven years. I had the electrical upgrades done to support those and to have a level 2 charger for my plug in hybrid vehicle. I've been thrilled with these improvements and want them available to others throughout the state without them having to do extra work to make them happen.

If we want to have a chance to protect the special places we love in the Ocean State, we need to take meaningful climate action, including reduce emissions from buildings. H7617 will put us on track to do just that. I respectfully urge the Committee and full General Assembly to vote in favor of its passage.

Sincerely,
Amanda Babson
61 Inez St
Narragansett RI 02882