



House Committee on Environment & Natural Resources

State House, Providence, RI 02903

April 22, 2024

**In support of H 7617: Building Decarbonization Act**

Dear Chair David Bennet and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island, strongly supports and urges you to pass H7617, the Building Decarbonization Act of 2024. The bill was heard by the Committee on March 21, 2024, and is being held for further study. This bill is a priority for the League's Climate Team, a top priority for Climate Action Rhode Island and key priority for the RI Environment Council.

Climate challenges abound today. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are a key cause of climate change - and the resultant warming of our planet and its rising seas. Rhode Island's Act on Climate set goals to address these challenges. Though plans to address carbon emissions in the transportation and electricity generation sector have been developed, no such plans have been put in place to address carbon emissions from the building sector. Yet heating buildings produces almost 1/3 of all emissions in the state.

According to the 2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, buildings in Rhode Island contribute 30% to the overall greenhouse gas emissions in this state. That was 4 years ago. A building decarbonization plan is needed this year. Rhode Island must minimize carbon emissions from every possible source. It is time to pass H7617.

The Building Decarbonization Act would ensure that both newer builds and old construction, where possible and feasible, have reduced emissions – and would take into consideration environmental justice factors. H7617 would further ensure that the “office of energy resources has dedicated resources sufficient to administer its responsibilities under this chapter to enable swift and steady progress towards RI's net zero mandate.”

The time for action is now. Our community and business buildings as well as our homes must diminish their carbon footprint if we expect to reach our state's climate goals, if we expect to reduce greenhouse gases in any significant way, if expect to mitigate the consequences of a rapidly changing climate and the onslaught of our rising seas.

This session is well-past the halfway mark. Committees and legislators are identifying their key priorities and a short list for the remainder of the session. Please include the Building

Decarbonization Act of 2024 on your short list. Send H7617 to the House floor with a recommendation for passage.

Thank you,

*Diana (Donnie) McGee*

Diana (Donnie) McGee, LWVRI Climate Team Chair

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