



Rhode Island Manufacturers Association
The Economic Engine for Rhode Island

03/21/2024

The Honorable David Bennett
Chairman, House Committee on Environment & Natural Resources
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H.7617, An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Building Decarbonization Act of 2024

Chairman Bennett and Committee Members:

Good Afternoon,

I am writing on behalf of the many manufacturers who have buildings that meet or exceed the square footage noted in this legislation. H.7617 gives the Office of Energy Resources (OER) the authority to carry out this legislation. By September 1, 2024, OER must submit a budget request for the amount needed for three years to carry out the legislation.

The bill creates a reporting requirement for “covered properties,” buildings that have at least 25,000 sq ft and are a single building, one or more buildings held in the condominium form of ownership or two or more buildings that are served by the same electric or gas meter or are served by the same heating or cooling system. Buildings with 50,000+ sq ft begin reporting March 31, 2025 (calendar year 2024 data). Buildings with 25,000+ sq ft begin reporting March 31, 2026 (calendar year 2025 data). Information that must be reported to OER includes:

- address of the building and municipality;
 - primary use, any additional use and gross floor area of the building;
 - building’s total energy use in kBTU and total greenhouse gas emissions in pounds of carbon equivalent;
 - building’s energy use by electricity, gas, steam, and other sources and any electricity generated on-site;
 - energy performance rating;
 - total potable water use in gallons
- OER would then use this information to create benchmarks by August 3, 2027. OER would adopt and publish recommended measures, policies and programs to achieve building emission reductions aligned with Rhode Island’s net zero goal. OER sets building performance metrics and standards for each property type and subcategory by June 30, 2028. Building owners would then be required to adapt their buildings to meet the new standards.
 - H.7617 also prohibits building permits for certain buildings. No city or town shall issue a permit submitted after December 31, 2024 for new construction or alteration of any residential, commercial, or mixed-use building that is not electric-ready. Electric ready means the building is designed with sufficient capacity for a future retrofit of a mixed-use

full building to an all-electric building, including space, drainage, electrical conductors, etc. An exemption does exist if some component is physically or technically infeasible – financial consideration is not sufficient. No permit shall be issued (submitted after December 31, 2024) for new State of Rhode Island owned building construction or alternation projects that are not all-electric – again unless not physically or technically feasible. There is an apprenticeship program requirement of 15% total labor hours on the construction job.

No permits shall be issued for the construction of any new commercial, residential, or mixed-use building that is not an all-electric building if the initial application for the permit was submitted after December 31, 2026. The definition of “all-electric building” does allow for a back-up system that only operates when the electric grid goes down.

I currently serve on the PUC committee reviewing the use of Gas in Rhode Island. 99% of the discussion surrounds private homes, tenements or condo’s. I have asked numerous times on how do existing manufacturers, some in old mill buildings, how do we reduce our carbon foot print. We cannot use mini-splits (which by the way do NOT function when the temperature drops below 32 degrees). No one has given me a solution but yet mandates continue to flow down to us. I am requesting that this bill be studied for further review or exempt manufacturers from this regulation.

Thank you,



David M. Chenevert
Executive Director
RI Manufacturers Association