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Rhode Island House of Representatives  
Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
Representative David A. Bennett, Chair

March 20, 2024

### In support of H7782: Clean Heat Standard

Dear Chair Bennett and Committee Members:

On behalf of Climate Action Rhode Island's thousands of concerned members, we write to you today to ask you to make good on our Act on Climate commitments, forge a path toward emissions reductions from heating and **pass H7782, the Clean Heat Standard.**

Rhode Island is ahead of the pack in its pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but our concrete plans lag behind our ambition. And when it comes to heating, we're at a disadvantage. A third of Rhode Island homes use heating oil and more than half rely on natural gas for heat.<sup>1</sup> We need to act quickly and efficiently to turn this status quo around.

**Mandates are working for renewable energy.<sup>2</sup> We need one for clean heat.** Like our renewable energy standard, the Clean Heat Standard would require heating service providers to phase out fossil fuels over time by offering customers an increasing percentage of heat from clean sources, such as heat pumps, geothermal, weatherization, and other low-carbon options.

The standard applies to heat providers, lifting the burden on homeowners or businesses. It's also funded by a form of carbon pricing, a more sustainable way to raise money to fund the transition away from fossil fuels than the current one: increasing electricity surcharges. This only disincentives the purchase of heat pumps or electric vehicles, options we must encourage.

**Another advantage of the Clean Heat Standard is that equity can be considered in the design of the standard to help ensure a just transition from fossil fuels to clean heat. Members of disadvantaged communities are more likely to live in older, less energy-efficient buildings and to be saddled with higher energy costs<sup>3</sup> and health impacts due to energy insecurity<sup>4</sup>.** These communities should not be further burdened by the transition to clean heat.

We must take the example of other energy markets leading the way with clean heat standards. At the state level, both Colorado and our neighbor Vermont have adopted clean heat standards.<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts is also in the process of developing a clean heat standard, and we could learn from the successes of these states as we formulate our own.

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<sup>1</sup> [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#)

<sup>3</sup> [American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Jessel et al. 2019](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Green Energy Consumers Alliance](#)

**In sum, consider the need for a mandate to start driving down fossil fuel use in the heating sector. One that is well-targeted, well-funded, and considers equity. The choice is clear: Support H7782, the Clean Heat Standard.**

Sincerely,

Jeff Migneault & Caitlin Sanford  
Presidents  
Climate Action Rhode Island