

PRO 2025 RI H5217
February 6, 2025

Testimony in Support of H5217 – The Rhode Island Clean Air Preservation Act

Members of the Committee, thank you for your time today.

I am Claire Stadtmueller, and my comments are from the perspective of both an artist and a citizen deeply invested in the purity of the air we breathe. As an opera singer, I depend on clean air—for my voice, and as all of us—human, and animals, for our very lives. Yet, our skies have become a chemistry lab and dumping ground for pollution, forever chemicals, and PFAS—hazards that do not simply disappear.

Rhode Island has long led efforts to protect its natural beauty, yet current policy allows polluting atmospheric experimentation, also known as weather modification. Cloud seeding releases pollutants into our skies without public consent, oversight, or even understanding of the consequences. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) confirms that after 80 years of experimentation, cloud seeding remains unpredictable and unproven (GAO Cloud Seeding Report, December 2024). PFAS—per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—are known as “forever chemicals” because they persist in the environment, accumulating in water, soil, and human bodies. The Department of Defense has identified PFAS as a key component of chaff.

Chaff is defined in H5217 as “*aluminum-coated silica glass fibers typically dispersed in bundles containing five million (5,000,000) to one hundred million (100,000,000) inhalable fibers, which fall to the ground in about one day, or for nanochaff, years, and then fall and break apart.*” These particles do not simply vanish; they continue to accumulate. (DoD Report on PFAS). The 1998 GAO Report on DOD Management Issues Related to Chaff documented that these releases could violate air quality standards due to hazardous emissions.

Weather modification has been repeatedly rebranded, from “cloud seeding” to “weather research” and, at larger scales, “geoengineering.” Scientific research weather modification such as the Israel-4 Cloud Seeding Experiment have shown serious problems, including disrupted atmospheric circulation, floods in some regions, and droughts in others. The study concluded that seeding **had no positive effect at all** (Israel-4 Study). Polluting the air under the guise of experimentation should not be Rhode Island’s legacy.

Rhode Island law currently allows weather modification (R.I. GEN. LAWS § 30-15-7 – Governor’s Emergency Powers), yet cloud seeding is an unproven experiment with serious legal and liability issues. Unintended consequences such as extreme weather events could impose heavy costs on residents.

H5217 is about responsibility. It ensures that the people of Rhode Island, have a voice in what is placed into the air and, ultimately, into our bodies.

The air we breathe is sacred. The breath of a newborn baby. The sigh of a tired worker.

The notes of a song carried on the wind.

Clean air is a non-partisan matter. Everyone has a right to breathe air free from pollution and forever chemicals.

Let's pass H5217 and protect Rhode Island's air for generations to come.

Claire Stadtmueller

BM, MM voice performance

Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center

www.BravaSoprano.com

06365

ADDENDUM

1. The 2023 Department of Defense (DOD) document , "Report on Critical Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance Uses," confirms that PFAS are an ingredient in chaff. p. 5/6

<https://www.acq.osd.mil/eie/eer/ecc/pfas/docs/reports/Report-on-Critical-PFAS-Substance-Uses.pdf>

2. 1998 DOD Management Issues Related to Chaff

NSIAD-98-219 Environmental Protection: DOD Management Issues Related to Chaff

3. GAO Report Confirms Cloud Seeding Effectiveness Unproven

Dec 2024 GAO Report

GAO-25-107328, Cloud Seeding Technology: Assessing Effectiveness and Other Challenges