

April 30, 2024

Representative Marvin L. Abney  
Chair, House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence RI 02908

**Re: The Nature Conservancy supports House Bill 7593**

Dear Chair Abney,

The Nature Conservancy supports House Bill 7593, which would require school buildings to be “zero energy capable” by 2036, as well as provide additional incentives for deep energy retrofits and requirement for labor standards. We are grateful to Senators Pearson, Gallo, Lawson, DiPalma, Euer, Cano, DiMario, and Ruggerio for their leadership in sponsoring it.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. We have chapters in all fifty U.S. states and in nearly 80 countries around the globe. Here in Rhode Island, we steward more than 14,000 acres of protected land. At The Nature Conservancy, we realize that we cannot succeed in our core mission without seriously addressing climate change. The science is clear and unequivocal: *we need to fully decarbonize our economy by 2050, with major emissions reductions before 2030.*

This bill does several very important things to get us to these targets:

- Requiring all public school to be zero energy capable by 2036.
- Enables school districts to pursue additional sources of funding without jeopardizing school construction aid.
- Significant incentives for energy efficiency – which not only saves energy, but saves schools money annually and reduces the costs associated with renewable energy.
- Important labor standards for projects above a certain size – ensuring that we are building the clean energy economy with family sustaining jobs, not exploitative labor practices.
- Increases capacity at the School Building Authority to assist with project design and management.

The climate crisis is real and urgent. Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We respectfully request that you pass this legislation.

Sincerely,



Angela Tuoni  
Climate Programs Manager  
The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island