
In support of an expanded Budget Article 3 Section 15

House Finance Committee, Clerk O'Brian, and Chair Abney,

My name is Caitlin Sanford and I am writing as a Rhode Islander and Co-President of Climate Action Rhode Island.

There is an exciting opportunity for you to act this week to help measure buildings emissions, the second largest source of emissions in Rhode Island, with the budget Article 3. With only five more years to meet the 2021 Act on Climate and considering federal rollbacks, we need to take comprehensive action to address building emissions in Rhode Island. You can make this happen.

The ask:

In the [draft budget, Section 15 line 14 \(page 33\)](#):

- Expand "state-owned, state-occupied facilities" to include all public buildings, including municipal buildings over 25,000 gross square feet.
- Amend the language to include commercial buildings as well over 25,000 or 50,000 gross square feet.

Why this is needed:

The buildings sector (electricity and heating) is the [second-largest source of emissions in Rhode Island](#), but neither the legislature nor agencies have taken action on buildings emissions since the Act on Climate passed in 2021.

The Governor's 2026 budget has included one full-time Office of Energy Resources staff member for building performance and benchmarking (mentioned in the budget Executive Summary). The **City of Providence Office of Sustainability already has staff working on Buildings Emissions Reporting Ordinance for all city- and privately-owned buildings.**

Software for managing building emission tracking (EnergyStar or similar) will be needed for state-owned buildings already and can be used for a bigger scope. With Providence buildings already in process, **the OER staff member can tackle noting emissions from more buildings than the state-owned, state occupied buildings.** Furthermore:

- **Seven states including Massachusetts and many cities and towns have already acted on buildings decarbonization.**
- **Many large companies, universities, and hospitals already track buildings emissions for their own net zero goals, and it is an easy lift to share this data.**

As the saying goes, 'what gets measured gets managed'. It is a no-brainer to measure emissions at ALL large buildings in Rhode Island if we will have any hope to reduce emissions from the buildings sector.

Thank you in advance for your action to protect Rhode Island's climate.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Sanford
Climate Action Rhode Island
