



# State of Rhode Island

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE REBECCA KISLAK, *District 4*  
*Second Vice-Chair, Committee on Education*  
*Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*  
*Committee on Health and Human Services*  
*Committee on Innovation, Internet and Technology*

February 25, 2025

Rep. Marvin Abney  
Chairman, House Finance Committee

By e-mail: [HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)

Re: Article 3, Section 15 – State Building Decarbonization

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing in strong support of Article 3, Section 15. In addition, I am writing to ask the Committee to include broader building decarbonization efforts as set forth in [H5493](#) in the budget.

The budget article includes (1) building benchmarking for state owned and occupied office buildings, (2) the setting of a building performance standard for these buildings, and (3) significantly because this last piece goes further than the Building Decarbonization Act, action to lower the carbon use of covered state buildings. This is an important and commendable step towards meeting the Act On Climate goals, and comes with an important staffing request that I fully support and hope we will approve in the budget.

The Building Decarbonization Act, H5493, will have a full hearing in the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, as it has in the past. This is the first time I'm in front of this committee on the same subject; I welcome the opportunity this budget article presents for me to propose moving the bill more completely into the budget.

It is important for the General Assembly to approve this budget article, and bring in all buildings in Rhode Island for this important work to reduce carbon use in Rhode Island. We cannot meet our Act on Climate targets without addressing carbon fuels used to heat and power our buildings in Rhode Island. The Building Decarbonization Act has three sections. First, it will require all large buildings (starting with those over 50,000 sq. ft. and eventually including those over 25,000 sq. ft.) to **report their building emissions**. Second, it will require the state to determine a **building performance standard** that will guide reduction of carbon use in large buildings. Third, it would codify the requirement that all new construction permits require buildings to be "**electric ready**;" this further clarifies the requirement in legislation we passed in 2022 ([Green Buildings Act](#)).

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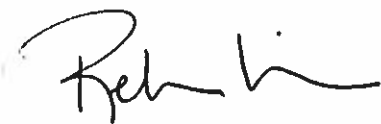
Significantly, Providence [has begun the work of benchmarking](#) for large buildings in Providence, which comprises a great proportion of the large buildings in the state. [Providence municipal buildings](#) have already begun reporting their carbon use. By May all large buildings in Providence are required to begin reporting. In effect, adding all large buildings in the state is simply expanding the present requirement. As all our city and town tax assessors use one of two companies and their databases, while it will take some effort to compile information and begin outreach to the buildings outside of Providence, I believe it is achievable with modest resources.

Once we are benchmarking, we can better plan to reduce our building carbon use. The bill as introduced this year anticipates that the EC4 will include a plan to create a building performance plan in its forthcoming 2025 report. The drafted legislation provides limited additional guidance and timelines as to what that might look like. I would add here that the budget article also provides a timeline and anticipates the very rough outlines of how a plan will be presented to the EC4 for feedback before it is implemented. The state could use the building performance standards as developed for state owned and occupied buildings as a roadmap for a larger building performance standard that is more widely applicable. In any event, opportunity for public comment on a draft building performance standard will be important so that we can benefit from the experience and expertise of our community members.

Finally, the third part of the legislation which could be pulled right into the budget if that is the desire of the committee reaffirms and provides additional details around electric-ready building requirements.

I would welcome the opportunity to talk in further detail about my strong support of Article 3, Section 15, State Building Decarbonization, as well as my recommendation that the committee pull in the rest of the Building Decarbonization Act, H5493, into the budget this year.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Kislak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Representative Rebecca Kislak