



**RHODE ISLAND COALITION
OF HOUSING PROVIDERS**

www.ricohp.org

March 16, 2025

To Honorable Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903
VIA Email: HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

RE: Letter in OPPOSITION to House Bill No. 5446

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to H5446, which would allow tenants to implement energy-saving measures within their rental units at their own expense. While energy efficiency is an important goal, this legislation creates significant risks and unintended consequences for property owners, tenants, and the housing market.

Allowing tenants to modify rental properties for energy conservation—whether through insulation, appliance upgrades, or other alterations—raises serious concerns regarding property integrity, safety, and liability. Without proper oversight, tenants may make unauthorized or substandard modifications that compromise their units, lead to code violations, or create hazards. In the event of damage or injury resulting from these modifications, landlords could be unfairly held liable despite having no control over the alterations.

Additionally, inconsistent and unregulated energy improvements could lead to increased maintenance costs and inefficiencies. Rental properties are designed and maintained as a whole, and piecemeal modifications made by individual tenants may not align with the building's overall energy strategy. This could result in increased repair costs, reduced system efficiency, and potential conflicts between landlords and tenants regarding responsibility for future maintenance.

Furthermore, allowing tenants to alter rental units could complicate lease agreements and property management. Ensuring compliance with local building codes, permitting processes, and safety regulations is already a significant responsibility for landlords. If tenants are permitted to make energy-related modifications, property owners would need to implement new oversight measures, adding administrative burdens and potential disputes over the condition of the unit at the end of a lease term.

Rather than placing the responsibility for energy conservation on tenants, a more effective approach would be to provide landlords with incentives or support to implement property-wide energy efficiency improvements. Programs that offer tax credits, rebates, or low-interest loans for landlords to upgrade heating systems, insulation, and appliances would be far more effective in reducing energy consumption while ensuring professional installation and adherence to safety standards.

I urge you to oppose 5446 and instead consider alternative solutions that encourage responsible, landlord-led energy efficiency improvements.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' or 'Z' shape followed by a diagonal line.

RI Coalition of Housing Providers