



Climate Jobs Rhode Island
1540 Pontiac Ave Suite A,
Cranston, RI 02920

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese
House Committee on Labor
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: Support for H-5305

Dear Chair Corvese,

Climate Jobs Rhode Island (CJRI) is a coalition of more than thirty (30) labor unions, environmental, and community organizations committed to working together to make Rhode Island a national leader in the development of a resilient 21st century economy through a Just Transition, that centers our frontline communities and frontline workers.

Our members range from those who represent the frontline workers who build, repair, and maintain Rhode Island's critical infrastructure and energy systems, to community groups like the United Way of RI and Childhood Lead Action Project; to environmental organizations like The Nature Conservancy, and Clean Water Action.

We write in strong support for House bill 5305. H-5305 is a necessity to ensure the safety of workers who are exposed to extreme temperatures in the workplace. This bill is a necessary and timely measure to protect workers from preventable heat and cold related illnesses.

Our climate is only growing warmer and we have already seen the impacts of working in extreme temperatures. It was just last summer when a construction worker tragically lost his life while working on the side of the Omni Hotel on a 91-degree day. No worker should have to risk their life on the job due to extreme temperatures. We have a responsibility to protect our hardworking men and women from these dangers. Passing H-5305 will help prevent similar losses and ensure that no worker has to risk their life due to extreme temperatures.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 436 workplace deaths between 2011 and 2021 due to high heat exposure in the workplace, averaging around 40 deaths per year. As temperatures continue to rise, emergency visits and heat-related deaths are expected to rise, placing workers at even greater risk.

H-5305 mandates employers take proactive measures to protect employees, including paid rest breaks, access to shade, warming or cooling stations, adequate drinking water, and personal protective equipment. These are reasonable, simple measures to prevent avoidable harm that can result in injuries or death.

Now more than ever, it is critical to pass these safety standards at the state level to protect working Rhode Islanders. Extreme temperatures pose a growing risk and we need to act now to safeguard workers. By passing this legislation, the state demonstrates a strong commitment to worker safety and health.

Thank you, Representative Corvese and bill sponsors, for introducing this important legislation and thank you members of the House Committee on Labor for the opportunity to provide testimony on its behalf. We urge you to pass H-5305 in order to protect the safety and lives of Rhode Island's workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aislinn Hanley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Aislinn Hanley
Program Director, Climate Jobs Rhode Island