

Testimony in support of H5450: All-Electric Building Act

Dr. Hans Scholl, 71 Fales Avenue, Barrington, RI 02806

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To Chair Casey and the honorable Members of the Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

Buildings are one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in RI. We have a mandate from the RI Act on Climate to reduce GHG emissions. The resulting goals for action in the building sector should be to stop burning fossil fuels in existing buildings as soon as possible, and to no longer use fossil fuels in new construction, or alterations to existing buildings. In other words: decarbonize and rapidly move towards all-electric buildings.

The technologies for all-electric buildings are mature, available at scale, and their installation price-point is comparable to fossil fuel technologies, with cost coming consistently down over the last decades, a trend that is expected to continue¹. The same holds true for operating cost: by 2033 all electricity used in RI will be from clean renewable sources, and the cost of renewable electricity is also expected to come down and, over the lifetime of the building, be lower than for fossil energy¹. Still installing fossil fuel technology locks owners, tenants and tax payers into the more expensive alternative, and they will, avoidably, pay more over time.

H5450 sets the right policy, appreciating the above reality and that all-electric technology has rapidly become the technological normal, and recognizing the urgency to decarbonize buildings. It does not aim low by asking for electric-ready construction, but requires all-electric as the standard, sending a strong message to maximize the opportunity for greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the building sector.

This is not a hardship, because for those buildings, where all-electric construction is not—or not yet—feasible out of defined reasons, electric-ready is allowed as exception. The bill also excludes hospitals, medical facilities, laboratories for biological research, and restaurants from the all-electric requirement, allowing for mixed fuel use in these type of buildings.

Please bring the bill to a vote in 2025.

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to Representative Handy for introducing this important bill.



Dr. Hans Scholl

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¹ Kingsmill Bond et al.: The Cleantech Revolution—It's exponential, disruptive, and now. Report, RMI (2024): https://rmi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2024/06/RMI_cleantech_revolution.pdf