

Rep. Stephen Casey, Chair
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
RI House of Representatives

SUPPORT FOR H5450 All-Electric Building Act

March 20, 2025

Dear Chair Casey and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support for H5450, the All-Electric Building Act.

Rhode Island buildings are a large contributor of green house gas emissions. We need to reduce those emissions in order to meet our Act on Climate goals. Not only do we need to stop using fossil fuels in existing buildings, but all new buildings need to be all-electric.

I am concerned that there is considerable opposition to all-electric buildings by fossil fuel producing and delivery companies. Another bill, H5493 The Building Decarbonization Act of 2025, also targets building emissions. Unfortunately in Section 3 of H5493, it is stated that all new buildings must be “electric-ready”. This term has been widely promoted. I see this designation as an attempt by the fossil fuel industry to further our reliance on oil and gas to heat our buildings. We need to stop burning stuff to heat buildings and cook food! There are cases where an all-electric building is not feasible, so H5450 compromises and has an electric-ready designation for those infeasible situations. There seems to be strict enough guidelines in this bill so builders and developers will not be able to skirt the all-electric requirement without due cause.

We need to be careful that the “electric-ready” option is not abused. The term “electric-ready” assumes it will be an easy switch to heat pumps if the owner desires it. First of all, nobody is going to switch out a new boiler or furnace until years in the future. Second, it isn’t easy to remove a boiler and plug in heat pumps. Refrigerant and condensate lines need other be installed. Again, nobody is going to want to pay for that added expense.

Let’s just start now constructing all-electric buildings and make this easy for both the builders and owners. The reduction in emissions will be healthier for the building’s occupants and the rest of us!

Please support this bill by voting it out of committee and urge its passage in the full House. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Joel Gates
Glocester, RI