

ACEC

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES
of Rhode Island

DATE: March 19, 2024

TO: Chair Evan P. Shanley, 1st Vice Chair Mary Messier, 2nd Vice Chair Arthur J. Corvese and Committee Members

FROM: American Council of Engineering Companies of Rhode Island (ACEC-RI)

RE: Engineering Industry Association Opposes House Bill 7846 – Access to Public Records

Dear Chair Shanley and Committee members:

ACEC-RI, which represents over fifty (50) engineering firms in Rhode Island employing 800 plus Rhode Island workers who provide engineering services to the State of Rhode Island, respectfully opposes House Bill 7846 – which provides that records of state contractors containing trade secrets and commercial or financial information are considered public records and no records used in any proposal, bid or proffer to the state shall be protected from disclosure to the public.

While ACEC-RI understands the intent of the bill, to create more transparency regarding state contractors' services, the language of the bill is not narrowly tailored to except out private financial information, trade secrets and confidential information which is not relevant to the scope of services provided by the contractor. In addition, the amendment to the current law as written is confusing in that the current law protects trade secrets and commercial or financial information from disclosure in one part of the law while the amended language in HB 7846 removes such protection in another section of the law. Given these reasons, this proposed amendment to the law in House Bill 7846 is overly broad, creates an internal conflict in the law and as a result would have a chilling effect on businesses contracting with the state.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of our concerns, and respectfully urge you not to move forward with House Bill 7846.

Sincerely,
Dorothy S. Davison



Executive Director
ACEC-RI

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