



Energy Reporting & Building Performance Improvement for Rhode Island

H5425/S0166 SUB: *The Building Benchmarking & Performance Improvement Act*

Lays the groundwork to tackle emissions from large existing buildings by requiring energy reporting. This bill would provide Rhode Island's building owners, state agencies, and policymakers with necessary data on emissions from large buildings and require a report with recommendations on how to reduce those emissions.

The building sector makes up almost 30% of all GHG emissions in the state, and we do not currently have a clear path on how to reduce these emissions. A Building energy benchmarking requirement is the number one policy we can implement this year to set the stage to address emissions from large existing buildings. Tackling these emissions is critical to achieve The Act on Climate's mandate of net-zero by 2050 as around 70% of our building stock then is already in place today.

Building Energy Reporting: Requires large buildings to report their energy usage and Greenhouse Gas Emissions to a central data repository such as ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager, a free and secure EPA platform used by nearly half a million buildings nationwide.

- Buildings Covered by Reporting Requirements (estimated 2,320 total):
 - Starting 2025: Public buildings larger than 25,000 sq ft
 - Starting 2026: Private buildings larger than 50,000 sq ft
 - Starting 2027: Private buildings larger than 25,000 sq ft
- The data collected will:
 - Help building owners measure their emissions, compare with their neighbors, and implement ways to reduce their energy usage. This awareness alone leads to about 2% energy savings.
 - Enable the state to perform analyses and develop recommendations on how to reduce the energy use of large buildings.



Evaluation & Recommendations for Building Improvement: Requires the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to evaluate benchmarking data, consult with stakeholders, and recommend policies and programs to reduce emissions in line with *An Act on Climate*.

- OER to analyze building energy data and publish reports
- OER to conduct stakeholder engagement including with building owners, energy efficiency industry, communities, small business orgs, and environmental justice orgs.
- OER to recommend policies including a Building Performance Standard, which is a policy to address existing building emissions through setting long-term energy or emissions intensity targets, with interim compliance milestones.

Establishes Framework for Effective Programs: Designates the Green Building Advisory Committee (GBAC) established by RIGL 37-24-5(g) to act as the Improving Buildings Advisory Committee (IBAC). The GBAC acting as the IBAC shall advise the OER on the implementation of this chapter including but not limited to recommendations for building performance standards. Also, OER is to estimate budgetary needs annually and provide to the General Assembly.

RI Would Follow Larger Markets

There are currently 6 states and over 40 municipalities with Building energy benchmarking policies. 3 states and 9 municipalities have also adopted a Building Performance Standard with dozens more in development. In a small state such as Rhode Island, it makes the most sense to implement these policies on a statewide basis, in line with *An Act on Climate*. If we want to achieve *An Act on Climate*, we must reduce our emissions from large existing buildings. This legislation will put us on track to do just that.

Contact

For more information, please contact Amanda Barker

amanda@greenenergyconsumers.org