



, Date: March 1, 2021

To: **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORPORATIONS, In Support of Bill 5503,**

cc: Block Island Power Company, Town of New Shoreham

From: Christopher Warfel, EEInc.

Re: In support of Bill 5503, Section 39-26.4-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 39-26.4 entitled "Net Metering"

Dear Members of the House Committee on Corporations:

My name is Christopher Warfel, President of Entech Engineering, Inc., Block Island, RI. We have been involved in energy conservation and energy generation, both conventional and renewable for over twenty-five years. Specific to the State of Rhode Island, we were retained by the Office of Energy Resources to bring a higher amount of renewable energy generation to the State, once the control of the funding was turned over from National Grid to the State. In two years we went from a total of six projects in five years, to approximately 200 projects in two years. We received a Commendation from Governor Lincoln Almond for our work. We have also received two national awards with our work in renewable energy technology, including the IREC Gauntlet Award for success under challenging conditions. I am a member of the test writing committee for only international recognized certification, NABCEP, which Rhode Island requires for its Renewable Energy Professional certification. My Masters Project was published concerning the design and economic analysis of autonomous wind-diesel plants in desalinating seawater by reverse osmosis. I have also worked in every type of electrical generation plant except geothermal and nuclear.

With that out of the way, let me please explain why I support this bill. The 3% cap is anachronistic. It was a number used for thirty years as what I believe was a number that was very low market penetration, but at the time seemed unreachable as solar was so new and expensive. Not many felt it would ever amount to anything significant. However the Department of Energy's SunShot program changed all of that by driving down the cost of solar and facilitating technical advances that simplified installation.

We are now at a point where solar competes very well with conventional generation, and the 3% cap has been surpassed by states that have allowed this to happen. Hawaii is well above 30% with minimal issues in the distribution or transmission area. Economic policies will determine further development, but with Rhode Island commitment to be 100% renewable by 2030 via Executive Order 20-01, lifting the cap is vitally important. The PUC still retains oversight with respect to economic policies at this point, it appears that we have the checks and balances to at least improve and level the customer generation field. We all understand that maintaining the financial viability of our regulated electric utility monopolies is very important. Often the economic fears of

From the office of Christopher Warfel

increased generation are overstated, and/or miscalculated. We now have a track record belaying those fears, convincingly proving that increased renewable generation has many positives for our future.

In conclusion, one may believe I support this bill because of my professional work. Unfortunately, after thirty years of work in this and oyster farming, I am not going to be doing this much longer. I have always looked to attempting to make this place better than I found it. This bill helps this along. It will provide good jobs, resilience to our State electrical grid if planned comprehensively, and have many long term economic and environmental benefits.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Warfel". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Christopher Warfel, PE, President, EEI