



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS

Administration

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April 2, 2024

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.  
Chairman – House Committee Corporations  
State House  
Providence, R.I. 02903

### Re: **H 7286 – Percentage of Income Payment Plan**

Dear Chairman Solomon:

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) has no objection to the establishment of an income-based cap on utility bills for customers at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. We would, however, suggest changes that would allow for greater flexibility in the regulatory process that would establish the program.

Rhode Island Energy's parent corporation recently established a percentage of income plan in Pennsylvania which includes an arrearage forgiveness component. Consideration of a similar component in Rhode Island would streamline these assistance mechanisms. In addition, the measure would benefit from a provision for minimum monthly payments when there's no calculable income and a more specific requirement for eligible customers to participate in energy efficiency programs. We also would welcome a requirement that customers enroll in budget billing which would help minimize the impact of our recent history of seasonal fluctuations in electric rates.

The Division would also prefer language that allowed for some regulatory flexibility in establishing percentage caps. The net ratepayer cost impact when the percentage of income plan goes into effect is an important factor to consider. Mindful that there are economically vulnerable households just beyond the eligibility provisions of this bill, those cost considerations take on added importance. We would prefer a provision that would allow the Public Utilities Commission to adjust the cap percentages considering overall programmatic cost.

Sincerely,



Linda George, Esq.  
Administrator, RI Division of Public Utilities and Carriers

CC: The Honorable Representative Scott Slater  
The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations  
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel