

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chairman, House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

RE: H-5484 – Relating to Public Utilities & Carriers – Penalty for Violations

Dear Chairman Solomon:

On behalf of Rhode Island Energy, I write in **opposition** to H-5484, which would amend statutory provisions pertaining to public utility violations.

Rhode Island Energy provides essential energy services to more than 770,000 customers across the Ocean State through the delivery of electricity and natural gas. Our team of 1,400 union and non-union employees is dedicated to helping Rhode Island customers and communities thrive, while supporting the transition to a cleaner energy future – in a safe, reliable, and affordable manner.

Today's existing statute and penalty structure, coupled with thorough regulatory oversight by both the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and Division of Public Utilities & Carriers (DPUC), strongly influence utility behavior and represent a significant deterrent to violations of state laws, regulations, and orders. The totality of authority over public utilities in this state mitigates the need for the changes proposed in this legislation.

We note that existing statute authorizes penalties on a per-day, per-violation basis. Moreover, state utility regulators wield substantial (and independent) authority over public utilities as part of the powers granted to them through Title 39 of the General Laws. **This authority ensures that public utilities are held accountable for their actions in a variety of ways** – not only through statutory penalties, but also via regulatory oversight of rates of return, performance-based incentives, cost recovery, and other levers.

Rhode Island Energy appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation and respectfully requests that the Committee reject H-5484.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,



Nicholas S. Ucci
Director of Government Affairs

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Corporations Committee
The Honorable Lauren Carson, Rhode Island House of Representatives