



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

### DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS

#### Administration

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March 20, 2025

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

### Re: **H 5815 – Public Utilities Commission Intervenor Support Program**

Dear Chairman Solomon:

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) thanks you and the Committee for providing the opportunity to submit this letter of concern in response to House Bill No. 5815. Serving as the advocate for utility ratepayers statewide, the Division understands the critical importance of robust engagement in hearings before the Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

However, the proposed bill would duplicate an already transparent and accessible open meeting and public comment process provided by the Commission. More concerning, this bill contemplates new, additional assessments to establish a new intervenor compensation special fund. Although the Division welcomes additional ratepayer advocacy, these new assessments and special fund are proposed at a time when Rhode Island ratepayers are already struggling to afford utility bills that have risen across the region. Indeed, the Division and Commission heard extensive, impactful testimony on cost increases from ratepayers and advocacy groups directly at a public hearing on March 10<sup>1</sup>—this same meeting also highlighting the effective public engagement process already in place.

Additionally, the Division is concerned that for-profit entities—potentially with interests directly opposed to ratepayers—may receive compensation under the as-written description of eligible intervenors and related administration criteria. The Division will not support any proposal that could allow for-profit entities or any other party with interests in opposition to our ratepayers to be compensated for their efforts, by a special fund capitalized by assessments, no less.

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<sup>1</sup> Links to video recordings of March 10 Commission public hearing on gas and electric rates: [VOD Part 1](#) and [VOD Part 2](#)

The Division notes that there are several alternative special fund replenishment sources described in the bill, including appropriations from the General Assembly. Nonetheless, the Division suggests that special fund compensation derived from direct General Assembly appropriation is similarly untenable, so long as entities adverse to ratepayer interests are eligible.

The Division appreciates the opportunity to share these concerns with the Committee. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact my office at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda George". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" and last name "George" clearly distinguishable.

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

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