

HB-5815  
PUC



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

### Public Utilities Commission

89 Jefferson Boulevard  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02888  
(401) 941-4500

Chairman Ronald T. Gerwatowski  
Commissioner Abigail Anthony

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.  
Chair, House Corporations Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 5815 – Public Utilities Commission and Energy Facility Siting Board Intervenor support program

Dear Chair Solomon:

I am submitting the following comments on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on House Bill 5815, which creates an intervenor support program to be administered by the PUC. While the PUC appreciates the sponsor's intent to remove financial barriers to participation as a full party before the PUC and Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB), the PUC cannot support the bill as drafted.

As drafted, this bill creates potential conflicts for the PUC, appears to cause the PUC to infringe on the EFSB's functions, fails to recognize the staffing and financial limitations within the PUC to administer such a program,<sup>1</sup> and has a virtually uncapped budget largely supported by ratepayer funds. In addition to these general concerns, there are several drafting issues and incongruities that the PUC has identified.<sup>2</sup> The PUC offers to address the specifics with the sponsor and stakeholders as appropriate.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 401-780-2147 or [cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov](mailto:cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov).

Sincerely,

Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias  
Chief of Legal Services

cc: Representative Morales

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<sup>1</sup> The PUC is authorized for three commissioners and ten support staff. None of the PUC staff is tasked solely with the financial management activities of the agency, instead relying on the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers staff which makes up the remaining FTEs in the dual-agency budget.

<sup>2</sup> We note that New Hampshire's similar legislation is one paragraph long. (N.H. RSA 365:38-a).