

HB-5576
PUC
Concerns



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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Public Utilities Commission

Chairman Ronald T. Gerwatowski
Commissioner Abigail Anthony

April 1, 2025

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

Re: House Bill 5576 – Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act

Dear Chair Solomon:

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) provides the following comments on House Bill 5576, the Utility Thermal Energy Network and Jobs Act.

When this bill was previously introduced, Commission staff had discussions with stakeholders on this bill and discussed concerns that the framework of the bill creates simultaneous regulated and unregulated pathways. We have also noted that the dates for utility activities and PUC action in the bill do not allow for any analysis of learnings from pilots prior to full program development. In addition, the PUC discussed how its regulatory process may differ from other states, particularly where Rhode Island has one primary electric distribution company and one gas distribution company. The PUC's concerns have not changed but we look forward to continued discussions as this proposal is further refined.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 401-780-2147 or cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias".

Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias
Chief of Legal Services

cc: Representative Cortvriend