

April 24, 2025

Representative Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chair, House Committee on Corporations
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02908

Re: The Nature Conservancy Supports House Bill 5580 on Net Metering

Dear Chair Solomon,

The Nature Conservancy is grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 5580 and thanks Representatives Potter, Boylan, Solomon, Cotter, Handy, Knight, Cortvriend, Speakman, McGaw, and Edwards for sponsoring it.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Here in Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy protects more than 14,000 acres of land and has partnered on the permanent conservation of more than 35,000 acres of land with partner organizations.

The Nature Conservancy recognizes the urgent need to address the climate crisis, including implementation of the 2021 Act on Climate. To effectively implement the science-based mandates set forth in Act on Climate, there is a rapid need for development of large quantities of renewable energy. The state mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also requires a transformational shift to electrification for fossil fuel-based infrastructure – such as the transportation and heating sectors, paired with large amounts of renewable energy to meet the needs of Rhode Islanders.

At the same time, we recognize the need to protect large tracts of forested areas and site renewable energy responsibly. The Nature Conservancy does not believe that this needs to be an either/or scenario – we need both clean energy and to preserve important conservation areas. We need to remove barriers that are in the way of siting in “preferred” locations, which includes residential and commercial rooftops across Rhode Island.

Right now, building owners can only size their solar systems to their annual average electricity usage over the past three years. However, many building owners are beginning to electrify systems that had previously been reliant on fossil fuels and may not be reflected in their historical three-year average. For example, if someone’s roof needs to be replaced today, it makes sense to combine that with adding solar now. However, their boiler may still have 4 years of usable life, and they may not plan to change out their car for another two years – their solar system should be allowed to be sized for these future needs. This is a message we have heard from our membership across Rhode Island loud and clear.

As stated, the quantity of renewables we need to build out to meet our climate needs is enormous. We cannot afford to waste any roof space on limitations in size.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony and are available for any questions.

Sincerely,



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