

May 29, 2025

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

**RE: H-6204 – Relating to Public Utilities & Carriers – Duties of Public Utilities & Carriers**

Dear Chairman Solomon:

On behalf of Rhode Island Energy, I write regarding H-6204, which would repeal several provisions pertaining to the administration and funding associated with demand side management programs. This proposed legislation would, in part, eliminate the requirement placed on the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to transfer \$5 million annually from electric distribution customers to the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) and strike provisions pertaining to the third-party administration of statewide energy efficiency programs. Rhode Island Energy supports these two aspects of the bill.

Rhode Island Energy provides essential energy services to more than 770,000 customers across the 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.

**Rhode Island Energy is fully supportive of the state's overall climate goals and is committed to doing its part to further the clean energy transition.** However, if the robust public dialogue around energy affordability this past winter teaches us anything, it is that immediate and near-term utility bill impacts must also be considered. This summer, approximately 25% of the "typical" residential electric bill (500 kWh per month) stems from public policy initiatives and state taxes, equating to more than \$35 per month. These costs increase or decrease based upon a customer's individual monthly usage. **While these initiatives provide important energy, economic, and environmental benefits for Rhode Islanders, they also come at a cost that must be paid by utility customers today.**

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Rhode Island Energy submitted testimony to the House Finance Committee in support of H-6005, sponsored by Representatives Lima, Santucci, Brien, Phillips, Casey, Read, Azzinaro, Noret, Baginski, and Costantino. H-6005 would remove the statutory requirement mandating the PUC to allocate \$5 million annually to RIIB. Likewise, H-6204 seeks to achieve the same outcome on page 4, line 34 through page 5, lines 1-9. As noted in that previous testimony, while Rhode Island Energy appreciates RIIB's mission, local electric and natural gas customers already pay hundreds of millions of dollars each year to support many of the same types of investments this incremental, statutory transfer ostensibly facilitates, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and demand side management initiatives. **Unlike those other statutory programs and investments, however, there is no meaningful requirement for RIIB to justify the use of this \$5 million annual transfer of ratepayer funds.** Although the statute currently imposes an obligation on RIIB to provide the PUC with an annual report on how the funds were utilized, that requirement does not have any real impact because there are no

standards for justification of the use of the funds and no consequences for failing to sufficiently justify how RIIB used the funds. **RIIB is not required to provide evidentiary-based analysis or expert witness testimony to the PUC demonstrating how these ratepayer dollars will be used and what potential benefits may be derived relative to the costs or alternative investment channels. Moreover, because there is no state regulatory discretion over this \$5 million annual transfer of ratepayer funds, the PUC does not have authority to adjust this funding request when considering other changes to utility rates and/or general economic conditions.**

Rhode Island Energy also supports H-6204's repeal of provisions pertaining to third-party administration of statewide energy efficiency programs (page 5, lines 10-34 through page 6, lines 1-28). Our Company testified in opposition to these requirements back in 2023 (H-5200, Article 5, Section 4). **We remain convinced that continuity of energy efficiency program administration, continued utility innovation, and transparent regulation have delivered substantial benefits to Rhode Island ratepayers, local businesses, and workers across the green economy.** This long-standing structure has fostered a network of more than 600 companies, contractors and subcontractors engaged in the delivery of energy efficiency services – *68% of which are headquartered or have a physical presence in Rhode Island*. The state's own [2023 Rhode Island Clean Energy Industry Report](#)<sup>1</sup> shows that nearly 55% of all clean energy jobs in the state are tied to energy efficiency. Moreover, with utility administration, Rhode Island remains a national energy efficiency leader – in 2025, the Ocean State was ranked #3 nationally for utility and public benefits programs and policies in the [ACEEE Scorecard](#). **A dramatic shift in the state's approach toward energy efficiency administration threatens to disrupt these gains.**

In closing, Rhode Island Energy is committed to working with state lawmakers, regulators, and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for more equitable and cost-efficient clean energy policy outcomes, particularly when those policies are funded through local utility bills.

Thank you for your continued leadership and consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,



Nicholas S. Ucci  
Director of Government Affairs

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Corporations Committee  
The Honorable Christopher G. Paplauskas, Rhode Island House of Representatives

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<sup>1</sup> The [Rhode Island Clean Energy Industry Report](#), developed by the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) and the Executive Office of Commerce (EOC), is available at: [energy.ri.gov/climate-change/clean-energy-jobs](https://energy.ri.gov/climate-change/clean-energy-jobs).