



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES & CARRIERS

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

March 19, 2026

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

Re: **H 7068 – Energy Facilities Siting Act**

Dear Chairman Solomon:

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding House Bill No. 7068.

Last year, the Division agreed with the overarching premise of a very similar bill before your committee but nonetheless expressed concerns about some potential unintended consequences in revising Title 39 of the Rhode General Laws in that legislative proposal. Fortunately, the bill at hand today accomplishes the original intent of investigating the prudence of transmission costs without the need to amend Title 39 in any significant (and potentially detrimental) way. Given that transmission costs are directly borne by ratepayers, and given that transmission costs are increasing exponentially as critical infrastructure needs are expanding, careful vetting of these costs is an objective that the Division wholly supports. Indeed, the Division believes this bill to be a laudable pursuit of affordability for all ratepayers regarding regional transmission costs.

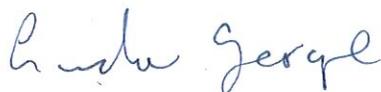
Of course, Rhode Island does not exist in a void when it comes to the regulation of transmission costs, or to the burden on its constituents, when such costs are uncontrolled. In fact, efforts to vet, limit, and allocate electric transmission costs in New England are happening on multiple fronts beyond our borders, to include regional (ISO-NE, the Consumer Advocates of New England, New England States Committee on Electricity), federal (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), and through state-driven policy coordination.

As the ratepayer advocate, the Division is directly involved in these efforts, both on a statewide and regional level. Zealous advocacy at the state level and continued pressure at the federal/regional level are essential to achieve the best outcome on affordability and prudent infrastructure planning. Indeed, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) continues to rely on the Division evaluation regarding need and cost of transmission projects and other siting matters when providing an advisory opinion to the EFSB.

Having said that, however, the Division has concerns regarding the bill's amendment that expands "siting" of transmission to include "the replacement, rebuild or expansion of existing transmission line infrastructure" in lines 32 and 33 on Page 4. The Division recognizes the challenges of exercising oversight of transmission asset projects, but expanding the siting board's authority beyond "siting" to include the jurisdiction over *existing* facilities is problematic. While oversight of transmission asset projects is critical, it is equally important that we pursue a more efficient and targeted approach to that oversight, rather than expanding jurisdiction in a way that may create unnecessary administrative burden. It may be pre-empted by federal jurisdiction and certainly strays from the Legislature's original intent in creating the EFSB as a "siting" authority. Finally, the bill's passage will impact the Division's resources.

The General Assembly may rest assured that the Division, in concert with the Commission and the EFSB, will continue great pains to fulfill our responsibility of vetting all energy proposals for their affordability and compatibility with the Act on Climate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel