



Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.
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3.19.26

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Representative Joseph Solomon
Chairman House Committee on Corporations
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
VIA Email: HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov

RE: Opposition as written H-7726 AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- SOLAR COST REDUCTION ACT

Dear Chairman Solomon,

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent over 1000 men and women who provide their skills through our vast network of signatory contractors in the Electrical Industry in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I also serve as one, if not the only, voice of the men and women who are not yet fortunate enough to be represented by an electrical labor union in the state of Rhode Island.

I am writing to you today in **opposition as written** H-7726

I am also a Master Electrician and have been licensed as far away as Oregon as well as most of New England. I was also a municipal electrical inspector in my younger days.

I wish to be clear on the subject. I am not a fan of unnecessary delays of any sort. I do have some difficulty figuring out where the issues may lie. Having been the recipient of close to 1000 inspections and the inspector for another few hundred, I can't think of a time that either scenario was an issue. Just the other day I pulled a permit off the State portal in less than 3 minutes. I was able to get the inspectors cell phone number immediately and schedule the inspection. I also ran a tests applications for Solar permits last night on the portal and every indication is the result would be the same. I could not complete whereas they were not actual projects, just a test. I would say for certain that bureaucratic delays are something that should be addressed if they are happening. Additional steps that assure the safety of the customer however, should never be undervalued.

My major concern is the virtual inspection piece. Besides the liability for the municipality with photographic evidence that can be subpoenaed after an incident, I am very concerned about the invitation for fraud. When I was an inspector, I often found what the electrician was not interested in showing me. When I was the recipient of inspections, I was often asked for my license and to show scopes far beyond the work I performed as the inspector tried to ascertain if other work was performed that was not part of the permit. Many times they did in fact find other work done by others with no permit or inspection.

It is critical that the inspector is on site in person to review both the integrity and safety of the work but also to assure the person doing the work is properly licensed and insured. Someone borrowing a license to illegally obtain a permit is most often not insured and therefore the customer is not protected. This happens more often than we care to see, from houses to hotels in Rhode Island.

If inspections are actually an issue, I agree 100% that should be and must be resolved. In RI, you can get most anywhere in 30 minutes. Typically inspectors give a modest window for an inspection and call or text 30 minutes before arrival. I would certainly be supportive of putting guidelines in place that mandated inspections within a reasonable time frame and a point of contact phone number to facilitate.

In conclusion, I again want to be clear, there is no type of work that should subject a customer to unwarranted delays. Delays for safety, compliance and such are most likely necessary but still should not be a big delay. There are no emergency solar installations that need to be done immediately so that should not be an issue. I would request consideration to the removal of the virtual inspection component and I would be supportive of reasonable timeframes for inspections and permitting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.", is written over a white scribble.

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr / Business Manager
cc:
Louis Mansollillo / Committee Clerk
Committee Members
Paul MacDonald / IBEW Local 99 Lobbyist
BuildRI
RI AFL-CIO