GREEN ENERGY CONSUMERS ALLIANCE

Representative Solomon, Chair **March 19, 2026**

House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
Providence, RI 02908

RE: Support for House Bill 7727 – Offshore Wind Procurement Policy Study Commission

Dear Chair Solomon and members of the committee,

Green Energy Consumers Alliance is an environmental non-profit based in Providence, Rhode Island and Cambridge, Massachusetts with a mission to speed a just transition to a zero-carbon future. We help our thousands of members make sustainable energy choices, and we advocate for clean and affordable state energy policy. On behalf of Green Energy Consumers Alliance, I write in **Support of House Bill 7727,** which Establishes an Offshore Wind Procurement Policy Study Commission to develop a clear strategy for Rhode Island to procure 1,200 MW of offshore wind by 2030.

Rhode Island was the first state in the nation to build offshore wind, but we are now falling behind in development. According to the Road to 100% Electricity Report, the state needs up to 1,100 MW of offshore wind to meet its 100% Renewable Energy Standard (RES), yet only 430 MW has been procured so far, with the state repeatedly backing out of additional solicitations. As electricity demand continues to grow, a target of 1,200 MW of offshore wind is not only reasonable but necessary, as it would provide roughly half of Rhode Island's projected electricity demand by 2033.

There's no denying that the current federal landscape is creating real uncertainty for the offshore wind industry. But states have more control than they think, and the benefits of offshore wind for Rhode Islanders are too significant to justify inaction. Rather than stepping back, Rhode Island should be actively planning for future procurements. By doing so, the state can send a clear signal to the market that it remains open for business and is committed to advancing offshore wind development.

Again, the benefits of offshore wind for Rhode Islanders are too significant to justify inaction.

Benefit #1: Affordability
Offshore wind helps lower wholesale electricity prices by reducing our reliance on volatile fossil fuels.

- This 2-minute video on price suppression explains how renewable energy lowers the price of electricity on the wholesale market in New England.
- New England ratepayers could have **saved around $400 million** if 3,500 MW of offshore wind had been operational during the winter of 2024 because it would have limited the number of hours that dirtier, more expensive fuels were called upon, raising the price of electricity.
- Long-term contracts for offshore wind ensure a fixed price over 20-30 years, providing **price stability,** protecting consumers from swings in natural gas prices that drive electricity costs.

Benefit #2: Reliability & Energy Independence
Diversifying our energy mix with local offshore wind strengthens grid reliability and protects us from fuel supply disruptions.

Offshore wind reduces exposure to gas price volatility

- Natural gas prices are extremely volatile, leaving the region vulnerable to sudden spikes in electricity and heating bills. Natural gas sets the price of electricity in New England over half of the time.
- Global geopolitical events can quickly drive up costs here in New England. For example, when Putin invaded Ukraine, natural gas prices surged leading to higher energy costs across New England. And we are seeing the current US and Isreal war with Iran create similar price hikes.
- In contrast, Offshore wind is purchased through long-term, fixed-price contracts over 20-30 years. We know the price in advance, providing stability and predictability that volatile fossil fuel markets cannot offer.
- Offshore wind acts as a hedge against natural gas and oil volatility, reducing exposure to global fuel shocks and providing predictable electricity prices.

Winter is when offshore wind has its greatest impact

- New England is heavily reliant on natural gas for both electricity generation and home heating.
- In winter, gas-fired power plants must compete with heating demand for limited gas supply. This competition drives prices up and increases the risk of reliability issues.

- At the same time, offshore wind generation is strongest in winter thanks to higher wind speeds and denser air. This makes offshore wind well-aligned with New England's seasonal reliability and affordability challenges.

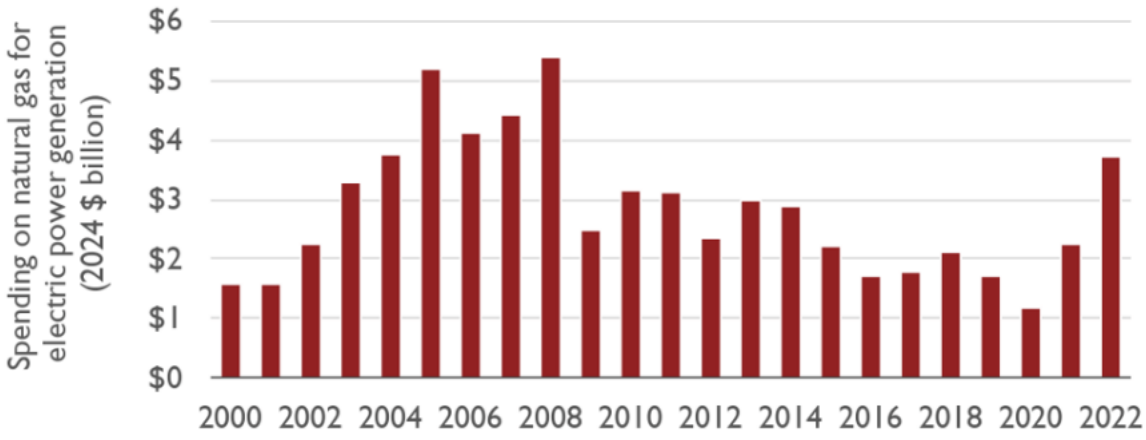
Benefit #3: Jobs & Local Economy

Offshore wind supports good-paying local jobs and brings investment to Rhode Island's ports, businesses, and communities.

Jobs

- Offshore wind supports good-paying local jobs across construction, operations, manufacturing, and port services.
- Projections from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics show that Wind Turbine Service Technicians will be the fastest-growing occupation in the U.S. through 2034, with a growth rate around a 50%.

Strengthening the local economy



Source: Sierra Club & Synapse Energy Economics Inc. ***Charting the Wind Report***

- New England currently spends an average of $3 billion per year on natural gas for power generation, sending billions of dollars out of the region.
- Annual spending has even reached as high as $5 billion in some years, depending on fuel prices and winter conditions.
- That's money leaving the regional economy, money that could instead be supporting local jobs, ports, supply chains, and long-term infrastructure investment here in New England.

- By producing electricity here with offshore wind, we keep energy dollars circulating in New England, strengthening the regional economy rather than exporting wealth to out-of-region fossil fuel suppliers.

Conclusion

Without further procurement of offshore wind, Rhode Island risks not only missing our climate goals, but our energy reliability and affordability goals. Offshore wind keeps billions of dollars circulating within the regional economy, lowers wholesale electricity prices, reduces exposure to volatile global fuel markets, and strengthens winter reliability when natural gas is the most constrained. At the same time, it provides long-term price certainty for ratepayers. And these benefits are not theoretical; offshore wind is already delivering them today, and its value will only continue to grow as more capacity comes online. We respectfully urge passage of H7727. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,
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