

March 19, 2026
House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair Solomon, First Vice Chair O'Brien, Second Vice Chair Caldwell, and Members of the House Corporations Committee:

My name is David Brunetti, I'm from Burrillville, RI and I am providing my comments in regard to several bills that are on your agenda for this evening.

Let me first start by stating that I strongly support H 7727 for the creation of an offshore wind procurement study commission to develop a clear strategy for Rhode Island to procure 1,200 MW of offshore wind by 2030. Notably, Rhode Island was the first state in the nation to build offshore wind, but we are falling behind on offshore wind development. Rhode Island needs up to 1,100 MW of offshore wind to meet its 100% Renewable Energy Standard (RES), but only 430 MW has been procured so far, and the state has continuously walked away from further solicitations.

With increasing energy demand, 1,200 MW is an appropriate target, providing about half of Rhode Island's projected electricity demand by 2033.

The benefits of offshore wind for Rhode Islanders are too significant for the state not to be developing a plan to procure more. Therefore, Rhode Island must send a clear signal to the market that it remains open for business and is committed to future offshore wind development.

Offshore wind addresses the affordability issue as the long-term low-price guarantee, something which is unheard of via the fossil fuel sources of energy, helps lower wholesale electricity prices by reducing our reliance on volatile prices within the fossil fuel markets.

Additionally, offshore wind allows for reliability and energy independence, items which are not offered by the fossil fuels which are brought into this state. Diversifying our energy mix with local offshore wind strengthens grid reliability and protects us from fuel supply disruptions.

Finally, there are the benefits in terms of jobs and the local economy. Offshore wind supports good-paying local jobs and brings investment to Rhode Island's ports, businesses, and communities.

For the above reasons, I strongly support H 7727 and urge you to vote in favor of this important legislation.

I also strongly support H 7884 to add federal backstop language to SECTION 1. Title 39 of the General Laws entitled "PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS", as it will prevent the federal government's extreme and ongoing efforts to undermine all of our protections for water and energy conservation.

I must also add that I am greatly concerned about the current and obvious attempt by a group of legislators that see this moment as an opportunity to roll back all the state's efforts to address climate change and make us more resilient.

Case in point is the misguided effort to roll back or otherwise eliminate our energy efficiency programs. Notably, the first and least cost manner in which to reduce energy costs is through conservation of energy. This is our first step prior to the installation of a heat pump system in our house at the end of last year, to replace our oil-fed boiler forced hot water heating system, was to obtain an energy audit and to then use the funds provided via our local electricity supplier – Clear River Electric and Water District – to insulate our attic.

Additionally, I must add, and as I communicated during the House Finance Committee hearing a couple of weeks ago, the attempt in the Governor's budget proposal to address the energy affordability issue by making cuts to the Renewable Energy Standard (RES) line cannot have any meaningful impact. It is more than a smokescreen; it is being used to try to make renewable energy a scapegoat for the energy affordability crisis which we are experiencing.

The fact of the matter is that the RES is only 3.5% of the overall bill for electricity. It is the cost of supply that is the issue here. Disincentives towards renewable energy simply makes energy more costly, not less! By RI Energy's own accounting, all renewable energy programs together represent 12.9% of the bill. Whereas the "supply" portion of the bill, which represents wholesale power purchases, is 44.3% - more than 3X as much as the overall cost of renewable energy programs and the cost for the renewable energy standard. They are misleading the public by misrepresenting the true costs. They are focusing on the wrong portion of the process!

It is part of a strategy¹ backed by fossil fuel interests to preserve the status quo in terms of energy while causing all of us, current and future generations, to be subject to the detrimental impacts from the delays to achieve what we must, a rapid transition to

¹ <https://digital.sierramagazine.org/article/AGAINST+THE+WIND/4732055/816504/article.html>

renewables as our primary source of energy, less we all suffer the consequences if we don't.

Let me close by listing those bills being considered at the hearing this evening which I support and those which I oppose:

I support the following bills and urge you to vote in favor of them:

H 7068 (Solomon et al.) on transmission spending review

H 7178 (Phillips et al.) creates a solar siting task force

H 7269 (Speakman et al.) allowing balcony solar

H 7726 (Boylan et al.) allowing solar e-permitting and expedited issuance

H 7727 (Handy et al.) creating an offshore wind procurement study commission

H 7879 (Cortvriend et al.) study of thermal energy networks in Rhode Island

H 7884 (Handy et al.) backstopping energy and water laws if feds roll them back

I strongly oppose the following bills and urge you to vote against them:

H 7139 (Place et al.) slowing renewables programs down

H 7174 (Paplauskas et al.) repealing energy efficiency charge

H 7176 (Chippendale et al.) repealing Renewable Energy Growth (REG) program

H 7177 (Chippendale et al.) moratorium on net metering, subsidies on heat pumps, and contracts on wind and solar

H 7523 (Quattrocchi et al.) five-year moratorium on REG, renewables and energy efficiency program charges on electricity bills

H7611 (Lima et al.) Gutting the Renewable Energy Standard

Thank you for this opportunity to provide you with my comments.

Sincerely,

David A. Brunetti
Burrillville, RI