

HB-7880
PUC



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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Public Utilities Commission

Chairman Ronald T. Gerwatowski
Commissioner Abigail Anthony
Commissioner Karen M. Bradbury

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chair, House Corporations Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 7880 – Percentage of Income Payment Rate

Dear Chair Solomon:

I am submitting the following comments on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on House Bill 7880, which creates a percentage of income payment rate for eligible electric and gas customers. This bill provides the PUC with authority, and mandates Rhode Island Energy to implement a tiered percentage of income rate. The framework in the bill is reflective of the New Hampshire percentage of income payment plan but without the “first come, first served” nature that comes from fixed budget. Additionally, the framework builds on the structure and enrollment features of the current low-income rates to hopefully limit the administrative costs.

In the past, the PUC has been supportive of the bill as drafted. Last year, the PUC suggested the legislature monitor Rhode Island Energy’s rate case to understand if they would offer a percentage of income rate like the one offered by PPL in Pennsylvania. They did not. Instead, they have offered an enhanced tiered discount for eligible electric customers and continuation of the previously approved two-tiered discount for eligible gas customers.

Because the rate case is pending before the PUC and the proposals between the legislation and the rate case are inconsistent, the PUC requests that for efficiency, any new legislative policy decision be made prior to the start of evidentiary hearings on June 1, 2026. The reason is that it would be costly for the utility to implement multiple billing system changes in two years.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 401-780-2147 or cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias".

Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias
Chief of Legal Services

Copy: Representative Slater