

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.  
Chairman, House Corporations Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

**RE: H-7886 – Relating to Public Utilities & Carriers – Regulatory Powers of Administration – Electric and Gas Meter Reading Required Quarterly**

Dear Chairman Solomon:

On behalf of Rhode Island Energy, I write in **opposition** to H-7886, which would, among other things, prevent Rhode Island Energy from recovering prudently incurred costs associated with “meter reading” or collecting any balance in the event a utility meter is not read on a quarterly basis. Importantly, our Company is already subject to rules established by the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) that govern standards for electric and natural gas utilities.

Rhode Island Energy provides essential energy services to more than 770,000 customers across the State through the delivery of electricity and natural gas. Our team of 1,300+ union and non-union employees is dedicated to helping Rhode Island customers and communities thrive, while supporting the transition to a cleaner energy future in a safe, reliable, and affordable manner.

Today, Rhode Island Energy is responsible for 800,000+ electric and gas meters across the State. Historically, the vast majority of our customers had their energy usage measured through Automated Meter Reading (AMR) devices. AMR utilizes very short-range radio frequencies to communicate metering data to our vans as we drive down local streets, providing highly accurate readings. This information is then communicated to our billing systems and used to calculate a customer’s monthly utility bill. **Rhode Island Energy is now in the process of deploying Advanced Metering Functionality (AMF) across its electric service territory.** This investment is intended to address key unmet needs in Rhode Island, including replacement of existing electric AMR meters, which are reaching the end of their design life, are obsolete, and will not scale. **AMF will also allow customer usage data to be sent directly to our billing systems and, in most cases, negate the need to manually access the meters themselves. This technology will also improve transparency by enabling customers to see their own usage in near-real time.**

Rhode Island Energy already endeavors to minimize the use of estimated meter readings—but **this practice is necessary in certain circumstances, is widespread in the industry, and is not unique to Rhode Island Energy.** There are several reasons why a customer may have their energy consumption estimated. For instance, Rhode Island Energy uses estimates for connecting and disconnecting service (e.g., when a customer may need to transfer service during a move from one home to another). There may also be occasions, such as those involving severe weather, equipment failure, or failure to be granted access to a meter, when an estimated reading is necessary. This included the unprecedented COVID pandemic, during which many in-person businesses and services were locked down. To protect the safety and wellbeing of our employees and customers, manual meter reads for customers who had their utility meters located inside a home or business were paused.

**Rhode Island Energy has implemented protocols to keep our customers informed and mitigate the number of estimated bills and these efforts have been successful.** For context, less than a tenth of one percent of Rhode Island Energy customers are receiving estimated bills for a protracted period in

excess of six months. For those customers receiving an estimated meter read, it is noted on their bills. At any time, if a customer believes the estimate is not accurate, they can call Rhode Island Energy's customer service team and request that a manual read be taken – and that read is usually conducted within one to three business days. Also, in those instances where a customer identifies an issue with an estimated read and/or associated billing reconciliation, Rhode Island Energy will work with them and the DPUC to resolve their concerns. On occasion, this includes testing the meter in place to ensure its accuracy. When a customer has received an estimated read for more than two months, a letter is sent asking them to call us so we can identify a path forward to eliminate the estimates and get an actual meter read. We will continue sending a letter each month until the situation is resolved.

**The DPUC has established rules governing “Standards for Electric Utilities” (815-RICR-30-00-1), which include thorough requirements for electric meter reading, accuracy and testing. Similarly, the DPUC has established rules governing “Standards for Gas Utilities, Master Meter Systems and Jurisdictional Propane Systems” (815-RICR-20-00-1) that address meter installations, reading, accuracy, and testing.** Both sets of Standards already require that meters be read “at regular intervals.” The latter allows for up to six months of estimation in service areas that do not utilize AMR unless a waiver is granted. In addition, the Electric Standards and Gas Standards include specific requirements for the rendering of bills. Codifying the requirements of H-7886 in statute would create confusion as between the statute and the existing regulations, which are far more detailed and prescriptive than the proposed statute.

**Also, the proposed bill violates the right afforded to public utilities, and confirmed by the United States Supreme Court, to recover just and reasonably incurred costs and would abrogate the authority of the Public Utilities Commission.** For example, this bill proposes to bar electric and natural gas distribution companies from recovering costs associated with “meter reading” – which could include everything from the cost of the meters themselves to the wages and benefits of local Rhode Island-based workers who support meter reading activities.

Finally, we note that the legislation mentions both “quarterly” (page 1, line 3) and “monthly” (page 1, line 5) meter reading, leaving significant ambiguity as to the actual intent of this bill.

In closing, Rhode Island Energy respectfully asks the Committee to **oppose** H-7886.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Nicholas S. Ucci  
Director of Government Affairs

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Corporations Committee  
The Honorable David Morales, Rhode Island House of Representatives