



Advancing the Clean Energy Future

22 Parsonage Street • Box 155
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May 12, 2026

House Corporations Committee
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Support of House Bill 8519 – Renewable Energy Standard

Dear Chair Solomon and Members of the House Corporations Committee:

I write in support of House Bill 8519 and with great appreciation to Representative Carson, her colleagues and House leadership for developing a more reasonable alternative to Governor McKee's proposal to delay and weaken the Renewable Energy Standard (RES). Acadia Center is committed to advancing a clean energy future through rigorous data analysis and ambitious but pragmatic strategies. While the organization's preference is to retain the strength of the existing RES, we understand that the legislature is responding to pressures to expand RES compliance to zero-emission resources such as nuclear and large hydropower and ease the cost of compliance.

Cutting Bills, Increasing Household Costs

When Governor McKee signed Rhode Island's historic and nation-leading Renewable Energy Standard (RES) in 2022, it was a firm, 10-year commitment not only to our climate mitigation mandates, but also to Rhode Island's clean energy future. It is a glaring omission to report the costs of clean energy, while ignoring all of the cost savings, one of the primary reasons for undertaking the energy transition in the first place. While **cuts to renewable energy may look like small bill savings**, they actually **increase household costs**.

Renewables in our regional grid – such as offshore wind, large-scale solar, and batteries – lower wholesale electricity prices for everyone. Supply makes up the largest portion of the average electric bill and is largely correlated with the price volatility of natural gas. In the winter, dual use of gas for both in-home heating and electric generation drives costs up, and the gas supply market continues to be influenced by weather and global events. **The RES is intended to mitigate against extreme risk associated with rising fossil fuel costs.** The status quo overreliance on natural gas will continue to be a serious threat to the stability and affordability of energy costs.

Scaling back renewable energy under the guise of affordability ignores the bigger picture of household costs. In addition to exposure to supply volatility, less clean energy investment will result in more pollution and a range of **unseen costs passed onto residents, from rising insurance premiums and rising medical costs to utility bills increasing due to growing storm response costs driven by climate change.** Limiting Rhode Island's clean energy economy defers and diverts major job creation opportunities, maintaining and potentially increasing out-of-state spending on fossil fuels.

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At a moment when federal clean energy support is eroding and energy prices continue to soar because of fossil fuel price spikes, Rhode Island should be doubling down on the tools still firmly within the state's control. This includes the RES.

Shifting RI's Renewable Portfolio & Easing RES Compliance

While Acadia Center is open to the concept of accounting for and driving achievement of electric-sector emission reduction with zero emission resources, the addition of existing and new nuclear and large hydropower resources does weaken the integrity of Rhode Island's Renewable Energy Standard (RES). In other words, the RES becomes **less effective at bringing clean local energy onto our regional grid**. H8519 maintains some of the ambition of the existing RES statute, ensuring **80% new renewables by 2033**, a vast improvement from McKee's budget proposals.

H8519 also proposes lowering Alternative Compliance Payments (ACPs) and extending the allowable banking of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). These adjustments aim to further ease compliance with Rhode Island's RES within the regional REC market. In effect, they are likely to make paying a fee for non-compliance a more viable option and would further separate a renewable attribute from its time of creation. While Acadia Center is not opposed to such revisions, we would note that they do move the RES further away from its original intent of reducing emissions in the electric sector and are subject to the dynamics of the regional REC market.

Importantly, **H8519 does *not* delay the timeframe of RES compliance**, and it is for this reason that Acadia Center supports H8519. As an attachment, I have included a side-by-side comparison of RES timelines proposed in H8519 and the Governor's recent budget proposals. The state must first evaluate how such proposed easements (expanding resource types, lowering ACPs) impact the cost of RES compliance, prior to considering shifting the dates/moving the goal posts of the RES.

Conclusion

H8519 offers some **expansion of and adjustments to the RES** to address immediate compliance costs **without fundamentally undermining the integrity and ambition of the law**. It is for these reasons that Acadia Center supports H8519.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

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RES TIMELINE COMPARISON, 2026 Rhode Island

	Existing statute		H8519		GBA #7		McKee Budget
Resource type	New renewables	Allowance of existing renewables	Renewable	Up to 20% Allowance of existing renewables and/or zero emission	Renewable	Zero emission (CES)	Renewable or zero emission - definition expanded to in operation after Dec. 31, 1997
2026	39%	2%		2%	39% → 34% <i>2% existing</i>		39% <i>2% → 25% existing</i>
2027	46%	2%	38.4%	9.6%	31%	3%	35%
2028	53.50%	2%	44.4%	11.1%	31%	4%	36%
2029	61.50%	2%	50.8%	12.7%	31%	6%	37%
2030	70%	2%	57.6%	14.4%	31%	8%	38%
2031	79%	2%	64.8%	16.2%	31%	11%	39%
2032	88.50%	2%	72.4%	18.1%	33%	14%	41%
2033	98%	2%	80%	20%	35%	17%	43%
2034	98%	2%	80%	20%	37%	20%	45%
2035	98%	2%	80%	20%	39%	23%	47%

RES TIMELINE COMPARISON, 2026 Rhode Island

2036	98%	2%	80%	20%	41%	25%	49%
2037	98%	2%	80%	20%	43%	25%	52%
2038	98%	2%	80%	20%	45%	25%	55%
2039	98%	2%	80%	20%	47%	25%	58%
2040	98%	2%	80%	20%	49%	25%	61%
2041	98%	2%	80%	20%	51%	25%	64%
2042	98%	2%	80%	20%	53%	25%	67%
2043	98%	2%	80%	20%	55%	25%	70%
2044	98%	2%	80%	20%	57%	25%	74%
2045	98%	2%	80%	20%	60%	25%	78%
2046	98%	2%	80%	20%	63%	25%	82%
2047	98%	2%	80%	20%	66%	25%	86%
2048	98%	2%	80%	20%	69%	25%	90%

RES TIMELINE COMPARISON, 2026 Rhode Island

2049	98%	2%	80%	20%	72%	25%	95%
2050	98%	2%	80%	20%	75%	25%	100%