

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** Tim Riker <tbriker@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 26, 2022 4:27 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** H 7755 - SUPPORT WITH AMEND

Dear Chair Abney and Committee Members:

House Bill 7755, Governor's Clean Energy Workforce Transition Commission, is a great bill but I am concerned that it should also include people with disabilities and ensure that this workforce transition commission is as inclusive and accessible as possible.

In 2017, Rhode Island was ranked 47th for employment of people with disabilities. Although this has improved after a DOJ settlement, people with disabilities continue to be marginalized and experience high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Before this DOJ settlement, people with disabilities were paid SUBMINIMUM wages. Even today, people with disabilities face rampant discrimination and often have to file lawsuits to safeguard their civil and human rights.

The City of Providence continues to be ranked among the worst cities for people with disabilities with poverty 5 times higher than the best cities. Without pathways and efforts to include them, people with disabilities will not benefit from this workforce program.

People with disabilities have abilities that are often overlooked and their contributions to society should be valued. They need to be part of the clean energy revolution and reap the benefits. Here are some success stories such as a Texas solar energy contractor who is deaf and hires installers who are deaf: <https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2020/07/axium-solar-gives-deaf-installers-opportunities-to-shine/>.

Please consider amending the bill to be more inclusive of people with disabilities.

Thank you,

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