



Climate Jobs Rhode Island
1540 Pontiac Ave Suite A,
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March 5, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: House Bill 7127 Articles 3, 6, and 11

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. On behalf of Climate Jobs Rhode Island, **I write regarding House Bill 7127 and several energy-related provisions included in Articles 3, 6 and 11.**

Climate Jobs Rhode Island (CJRI) is a coalition of more than thirty (30) environmental, labor and community organizations committed to working together to make Rhode Island a national leader in the development of a resilient 21st century economy through a Just Transition, one that centers our frontline communities and frontline workers. Our members include unions representing the workers who build, repair and maintain Rhode Island's critical infrastructure and energy systems, alongside environmental and community organizations dedicated to advancing equity, public health, and affordability.

Article 11: Relating to Affordability; Sections 3 through 11- Energy Regulation and Affordability

Section 8:

We write in **strong opposition** to Section 8 of Article 11, which would extend compliance with Rhode Island's Renewable Energy Standard (RES) by 17 years, shifting the requirement for 100% clean electricity from 2033 to 2050.

Delaying the RES sends a destabilizing market signal that could push projects, and the associated jobs and tax revenue, to neighbouring states that are maintaining strong targets. It will negatively impact jobs and energy costs in our state. RI has no need to follow the federal example of destabilizing the private sector and risking workers' livelihoods.

To meet our end needs, we need to develop local, abundant energy that is cheap to build. That means expanding solar, storage, geothermal, etc. Those are projects that keep our skilled tradesmen and women working.

The RES has helped drive solar development, offshore wind procurement, and grid modernization projects that create construction jobs, electrical work, and long term operations and maintenance employment. These investments keep energy dollars circulating in Rhode Island rather than exporting them to out of state fossil fuel markets. Weakening this target risks slowing that economic momentum at a time when workforce stability and energy affordability are top concerns.

The RES and Act on Climate were championed by leaders who understood that climate action and economic development go hand in hand. Maintaining the 2033 target honors that forward looking leadership and the

stability it created for workers, businesses, and communities across the state. RI has no need to follow the federal example of destabilizing the private sector and risking workers livelihoods.

Section 3:

We write in **opposition** to Section 3 of Article 11 that would cap annual electric and gas energy efficiency program budgets at \$75 million. Energy efficiency is the most cost-effective tool available to lower energy bills, reduce demand, and support high-quality local jobs. Due to current ratepayer funded energy efficiency, Rhode Island's electric load is 5% lower than it was in 2005, rather than the projected 15% higher.

According to the [Energy Efficiency Council's most recent annual report](#), energy efficiency programs in RI resulted in:

- \$448 million in total benefits to Rhode Islanders
- 740 full time jobs in the state
- \$3 in benefits to Rhode Islanders for every \$1 invested¹

According to Rhode Island Energy's retail rate filings, the majority of a typical electric bill is driven by supply and distribution costs, not state clean energy programs.² The supply charge reflects wholesale electricity prices in the regional market, which vary significantly with fossil fuel price volatility. The distribution charge recovers the utility's operating costs and authorized return on equity. Together, these components account for the majority of what customers pay each month.

Focusing narrowly on renewable energy and energy efficiency programs without acknowledging the broader structure of electric bills paints an incomplete picture of what is truly driving costs. In reality, policies that expand renewable energy and energy efficiency reduce Rhode Island's exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets, and stabilize energy costs over time.

If we are serious about lowering energy bills, we must be honest about what drives them. Rhode Islanders deserve a full accounting of their electric bills, not one that highlights a small portion of costs while leaving the largest drivers unaddressed.

Article 3: Relating to Government Reform and Reorganization; Section 16- Energy Benchmarking

We write in strong support of the state facilities benchmarking and performance standards program and urge the Committee to keep this funding and structure intact. Benchmarking is a foundational step in improving building performance, identifying inefficiencies, and delivering both energy and cost savings for ratepayers.

Article 6: Relating to Capital Development Program; Q5 of the Green Bond: Proposes \$10M for funding energy efficiency infrastructure.

We support Question 5 of the Green Bond, proposing \$10M for energy efficiency infrastructure. However, additional investment in energy efficiency is necessary to continue seeing the benefits of these well maintained programs.

While we support the inclusion of energy efficiency funding in this bond, we believe greater investment is needed to meet Rhode Island's climate and economic goals. It would be our recommendation that the General

¹ <https://eec.ri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-EEC-Annual-Report.pdf>

² <https://ripuc.ri.gov/Docket-26-05-EL>

Assembly consider the proposed Energy Infrastructure and Affordability Bond framework that includes strategic investment in:

- Utility scale geothermal energy infrastructure
- Distributed energy resources
- Solar on public schools
- Transportation planning

Targeted bond investments in these areas would accelerate emissions reductions and create durable, in-state job pipelines across the building trades. We encourage the Committee to view the Green Bond allocation as an important first step, while continuing to build toward the level of investment necessary to fully support Rhode Island's workforce.

The changes proposed in the budget would cause significant harm to our local economy and energy sector. It will make local energy projects unaffordable, meaning less work for our skilled tradespeople. The economic opportunity spurred from these programs have created thousands of jobs and lowered energy costs for municipalities. **This is a short term fix that will lead to increased costs for families across the state.** These policies are what have made RI a national leader- a leader in jobs, climate, and commitment to working families.

As a state, we must pursue avenues to tackle the affordability crisis, but as far as energy, that is why we must lean in to these policies and to building out local, abundant energy that is grown in our backyard- not kill the solar industry and leave us more dependent on the volatile fossil fuel market.

We appreciate the Governors Executive Order calling for a working group to study these issues. As the budget stands, we have many concerns with Article 11 but are willing and looking forward to working with the Administration to identify a better path forward.

If there are any questions over what's presented in this testimony, please feel free to reach out via the email listed below.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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