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Rhode Island Works Best When We Say **UNION YES.**

March 5, 2026

Chairman Marvin Abney  
 House Committee on Finance  
 Rhode Island State House  
 Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony on HB7127- Article 3: Section 16, Article 6: Question 5, and Article 11: Section 3-9 & 11

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the House Committee on Finance,

On behalf of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, which represents over 80,000 union members across the public and private sectors, we offer the following comments regarding the Governor’s proposed budget, with a particular focus on Article 3: Section 16, Article 6: Question 5, and Article 11: Sections 3 and 8.

For nearly a decade, Rhode Island’s clean energy policies have supported thousands of good local jobs, particularly in the building trades. The same policies that have delivered measurable savings to municipalities, hospitals, school districts, and other public institutions. The provisions in this budget, specifically those impacting the energy efficiency programs and the renewable energy standard, threaten to dismantle that progress, which in turn, eliminates jobs and undermines local energy investments.

**Article 3: Section 16 – Energy Benchmarking and Performance Standards Program**

The Rhode Island AFL-CIO supports Article 3: Section 16, which allocates funding for a state facility energy benchmarking and performance standards program. This is a smart investment in Rhode Island’s infrastructure, climate goals, and workforce.

By requiring state-owned and occupied buildings over 25,000 square feet to track and reduce their emissions, the state is creating a long-term, predictable pipeline of work for skilled union tradespeople in energy efficiency, HVAC, electrical, mechanical, and building operations. This system of tracking and reducing energy emissions has been both tested and proven by the City of Providence along with other cities and states across the country.

**Article 6: Question 5 – Green Economy and Clean Energy Bonds**

The Rhode Island AFL-CIO supports Article 6: Question 5, which includes \$10 million for energy efficiency infrastructure in the Green Bond. However, we urge the General Assembly to increase this investment to \$25 million (bringing the total GO Bond to \$65M) and to prioritize funding for:

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

Strategic bond investments in these areas would accelerate emissions reductions while creating a robust, in-state pipeline of jobs across the building trades. While bond funding is an important tool, it should complement, not replace, stable investments that sustain long-term employment and energy investments.

Patrick Crowley [President](#) • Karen Hazard [Secretary-Treasurer](#)  
 Cheryl Masciarelli [Office Manager](#) • Autumn Guillotte [Political Director](#) • Erica Hammond [Legislative Director](#)



**Article 11: Section 3 and 8 – Affordability**

The Rhode Island AFL-CIO opposes the following provisions in Article 11:

- Sections 3 – Cap on Energy Efficiency Programs; AND
- Section 8 – Delay of the Renewable Energy Standard by 17 Years.

Energy efficiency is among the most cost-effective tools available to lower energy bills while supporting high-quality local jobs. Capping these programs would directly reduce employment across the trades, eliminate apprenticeship opportunities, and destabilize employers who rely on predictable program funding.

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 invested

By putting a cap on energy efficiency programs, this proposal stands to cut savings across the state. These are not abstract cuts, they translate directly into lost jobs and reduced economic activity across Rhode Island. Additionally, delaying the Renewable Energy Standard (RES) by seventeen (17) years sends a damaging signal to both workers and employers. The existing standard has been a key driver of clean energy construction, grid modernization, and long-term operations and maintenance jobs.

Policies like the RES are essential for workforce planning, and weakening this policy undermines private investment, threatens local jobs, and jeopardizes Rhode Island's ability to meet its economy-wide emission reduction targets.

In conclusion, the Rhode Island AFL-CIO recognizes Governor McKee's intention to alleviate the cost-burden of utility bills on all Rhode Islanders. However, as written, this budget proposal will not have its intended impact. Instead it would dismantle energy efficiency programs and investments in local energy infrastructure, both of which supply good union jobs and affordable energy to the state.

The Rhode Island AFL-CIO appreciates the formation of a working group to address some of these issues through the Governor's Executive Order. However, for the reasons stated above, we have significant concerns with the proposals in Article 11 – Relating to Affordability: Sections 3-11, as written, and we look forward to working with our affiliated local unions and the administration to address these concerns and identify a reasonable path forward.

Respectfully submitted,



Erica A. Hammond  
*Legislative Director*, Rhode Island AFL-CIO