

## Angel's Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 7695

May 6, 2026

To the Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Angel Lopez, and I am a resident of Providence. I write to you today in opposition to House Bill 7695 because a Data Center in Rhode Island is counterproductive to the RI 2030 Plan. The 30-year sales and use tax exemption will hinder a competitive tax environment for small business owners who make up ½ of the jobs in Rhode Island. Approval of a Qualified Data Center as described will impede upon the goals of creating a healthier Rhode Island and Advancing Infrastructure and Clean Energy.

House Bill 7695 will enable the expedited and incentivized approval process for a known polluter described in this bill as a Data center. There is no mention of any penalty or fine, for an early exit or for a data center that has reached its sixth anniversary and does not want to pay the fines for not meeting certification requirements. However, the legislation does include an automatic approval clause similar to the automatic approval clause found in R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-32-4 (source: <https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/Statutes/TITLE39/39-32/39-32-4.htm>). Page 10 lines 31 to 32 state:

“Failure to approve or deny the application within sixty (60) days after the date the owner or operator submits the application the director shall constitute approval of the qualified data center.”

Regardless of all the nice to have requirements for any data center project in Rhode Island, there is no need for an auto approval for a tax exemption for a data center project proposal that is aligned with the RI 2030 Plan. Existing Data Centers in the US are known as noise makers and polluters. The drive-up electricity costs for residents because data centers increase the regional demand for energy.

According to the bill in question, a data center owner or operator if committed, can decide and plan to pay up \$1 Million to the department of revenue on their sixth Year Anniversary instead of investing \$10 Million in a renewable energy source. That same data center would have already negatively impacted the environment, the electricity rates of many residents and small businesses, and the local water source but would be allowed to operate for another year regardless of what your constituents say or have experienced over the first six years.

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I recommend all committee members to hold House Bill 7695 for further study as it will push state agencies away from goals of the RI 2030 Plan.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Angel Lopez  
*Resident of Providence, RI*