

**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF
ELECTRICAL WORKERS**



LOCAL 99

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.
Business Manager

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Representative Stephen M. Casey
Chair, House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903
rep-casey@rilegislature.gov

Re: Support for H 5967; An Act Relating to Taxation -- Levy and Assessment of Local Taxes

Dear Chairman Casey,

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent over 1000 Men and Women who provide their skills for our Signatory Contractors in the Electrical Industry, in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I also am one of, if not the only voice for the men and women who are not yet fortunate enough to be represented by an electrical labor union in the state of Rhode Island.

I wish to express our strong support for **H-5967** for the following reasons:

The men and women of Local 99 have been in the renewable energy business for many decades. We started to further engage in 2008 when we installed the largest solar installation in the State of Rhode Island, at that time, on our own facility. A whopping 50 KW system. As we know, the industry has grown to where systems 1000 times that size are becoming routine.

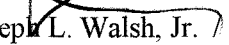
After collaborating for several years with our environmental, elected officials and development partners, we were successful in passing groundbreaking legislation that assisted in hitting our renewable energy targets while preserving our critical ecosystems with Solar Siting Legislation.

There is no question from any side as to what the purpose of that legislation was. Move solar development to more environmentally desirable areas and continue towards our goal of a 100% renewable energy State. This move, which my union supported then and still supports now, was predicted to negatively impact our employment in this sector as we committed to this important transition. As anticipated, it did in fact negatively impact our employment. We can accept that fact as we transition to projects such as rooftops and brownfields but we must understand and commit to the necessity and urgency.

This bill not only sets a revenue generator for the municipality, it also encourages developers to seek out brownfields that are currently not only unused but in many case continuing to poison our world. That dual benefit should be appreciated by all parties.

In conclusion, I believe this bill sells itself but I wanted to make sure the committee is aware that this powerful piece of legislation will help expand Rhode Island's renewable energy footprint while actually cleaning up the ecological sins of the past that have been all but ignored. This bill will also of course provide employment for the skilled men and women who install solar arrays in our great State. With that, I again urge sincere consideration of **H-5967**.

Sincerely,


Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. Business Manager
cc: Committee members
Dawn Huntley, Committee Clerk
Representative June Speakman