



March 31, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey, Chairman
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H.8294, An Act Relating to Property – Abandoned Property

Dear Chairman Casey,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition support the passage of House bill 8294, which would classify battery energy storage systems (“BESS”) as a by-right use on properties adjudicated as “abandoned” by the Rhode Island Superior Court or on previously contaminated properties.

BESS facilities are a necessary grid enhancing technology and Rhode Island has fallen far behind 46 states in growing this industry for the benefit of the ratepayers. Rhode Island is 47th in the country for energy storage development (just ahead of Louisiana, North Dakota, and South Dakota). Massachusetts has installed 482.2 MW of energy storage and Connecticut has 340 MW in development. Rhode Island has already fallen far behind its neighbors in this industry.

The 3 MW storage system installed in the Pascoag Utility District (PUD) provides an example of the grid benefits offered by energy storage systems. According to the PUD general manager, this system saved the Pascoag ratepayers \$12 million by avoiding transmission infrastructure upgrades. Incentivizing energy storage systems will help in saving business and residential ratepayers on their electricity bills.

Rhode Island has the fourth highest electricity rates in the country. Finding ways to address the high electricity costs should be a focus of the legislature. The PUD example above displays how these projects can save ratepayers significant dollars.

For these reasons we urge the committee to recommend passage of H.8294. Thank you for your consideration.

The Rhode Island Business Coalition represents 50 industries and 6,280 businesses that employ 231,200 people throughout Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

David Chenevert, Chairman, Rhode Island Business Coalition

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce

Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Regulations Subcommittee

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit Tax and Budget Committee

cc. House Municipal Government and Housing Committee members