

January 27, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chairman, House State Government & Elections Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

RE: H-7235 – Relating to State Affairs & Government – Nuclear Plant Projects

Dear Chairman Shanley:

On behalf of Rhode Island Energy, I write in **support** of H-7235 which seeks to amend Rhode Island General Laws pertaining to the approval or denial of construction of nuclear power plants. We applaud Speaker Pro Tempore Kennedy's leadership in advancing this important legislation.

Rhode Island Energy provides essential energy services to more than 770,000 customers across the Ocean State through the delivery of electricity and natural gas. Our team of 1,300+ union and non-union employees is dedicated to helping Rhode Island customers and communities thrive, while supporting the transition to a cleaner energy future – in a safe, reliable, and affordable manner.

To achieve the state's Act on Climate mandates and support anticipated growth in electric demand, Rhode Island (and the New England region) will require new investment in critical energy infrastructure. While renewable generation resources, such as solar and wind, may contribute to meeting future load growth, *they cannot alone maintain a safe and reliable grid or meet resource adequacy needs.* **For the foreseeable future, the region will continue to depend on existing and new "baseload" generation resources capable of ramping production on short notice to meet shifts in energy consumption and adequately backstop intermittent resources when production is curtailed due to shifts in weather and cloud cover.**¹ This is not an argument *against* renewable energy – indeed, Rhode Island has made meaningful progress integrating wind and solar, and those resources are important in reducing emissions and diversifying supply over time. However, it is a stark reality in which the grid operator and utilities must function if we are to preserve reliable energy supplies for a society increasingly dependent on the grid.

Nuclear generation provides a unique opportunity to strengthen grid reliability, enhance resource adequacy, improve regional fuel diversity, and contribute to domestic energy independence without expanding the region's carbon footprint. Continued technological advancements – including small modular reactors – place a lower-carbon future within reach. It is in Rhode Island's energy, economic, and environmental interest to be prepared to seize emerging investment opportunities in a timely fashion while ensuring that any future electric generation proposals are thoroughly vetted by state experts and stakeholders.

Existing law grants the General Assembly the exclusive jurisdiction over "(t)he final approval or denial of a project plan for the location and construction of...a nuclear plant within the state." This

¹ For example, during the recent cold snap/snowstorm, the New England grid was sustained by non-intermittent, dispatchable resources that included nuclear, natural gas and oil. Renewables, including solar and wind, met just 5% of peak regional demand on January 25th, and large hydropower was curtailed due to energy demands in Canada.

requirement predates the establishment of the state's Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB) in 1986, which consists of expert state officials representing the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and the Division of Statewide Planning. The EFSB has oversight of proposals for other types of electric generation facilities (40 MW or greater) as well as "facilities for the processing, enrichment, storage, or disposal of nuclear fuels or nuclear byproducts."² Rhode Island Energy supports the consolidation of authority over new electric generation facilities under the EFSB, as governed by the state's Energy Facility Siting Act.

This bill recognizes the importance of helping Rhode Island get ahead of the curve in attracting its fair share of research and development opportunities – along with direct investment in critical energy infrastructure – that keep local energy dollars right here at home to strengthen grid reliability, support good-paying jobs, and reduce emissions responsibly. These are the building blocks of a safe, reliable, and affordable energy future capable of powering a vibrant, more sustainable 21st century economy. Although state law prevents our Company from investing in electric generation resources – even those that are no-to-low carbon – Rhode Island Energy stands ready to work with the General Assembly on complementary pathways to lower energy supply costs, spur job growth, reduce emissions, and improve reliability and resource adequacy through regulated investment in diverse energy resources crucial to achieving the Act on Climate.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,



Nicholas S. Ucci
Director of Government Affairs

CC: The Honorable Members of the House State Government & Elections Committee
The Honorable Brian Patrick Kennedy, Speaker Pro Tempore

² RIGL §42-98-3(e).