



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

OFFICE OF
ENERGY RESOURCES

Solar in RI: Present and Future

Presented to the RI Legislative Committee for
the Placement of Solar Panels on Interstate
Highways

November 1, 2023





Background on the Office of Energy Resources

- The Office of Energy Resources was established by the General Assembly in 2006.
- Comprised of fifteen (15) FTEs and five (5) energy fellows.
- Provide support to homeowners, small businesses, commercial/industrial customers, non-profits, farmers, federal government, schools and municipalities on energy matters.
- Oversight, development and management of renewable energy and energy efficiency programs and policies.
- Implementation of funding received by US Department of Energy.
- Oversight and support of energy functions with the RI Emergency Management Agency during hurricanes, tropical storms, extended temperature cold snaps and winter storms.

Solar on Highways – it has been done!



Photo Credits:

Left: Ray C. Anderson Foundation

Top Right: Jesse Costs/WBUR

Lower Right: MassDOT



Solar and Energy Storage Programs

- Net Metering
- Virtual Net Metering
- Renewable Energy Fund (REF)
 - ✓ Affordable Solar Access Pathways (ASAP)
 - ✓ Small-scale and Commercial-scale grant program
 - ✓ Brownfields Program
 - ✓ Energy Storage
 - ✓ Carports
- Renewable Energy Growth Program
- Community Solar

2023 Legislative Session

S 0684A/H 5853A

- ❑ Expands both the virtual net metering (VNM) and Renewable Energy Growth (REG) programs but adds restrictions to protect forests and ratepayers and phases out virtual net metering by 2030.
- ❑ Defines core forest and preferred sites, including highway and major road median strips, and provides that any net metering resource owned or operated by a renewable energy developer be treated as an eligible net metering system provided it is not in a core forest.
- ❑ For VNM, the bill would allow commercial and industrial customers (C&I) to serve as off-takers.
 - Projects would be paid at 80% of the retail rate rather than the current 100%.
 - Caps the total amount of new net metering projects to a total of 275 MW between April 15, 2023 and July 1, 2030. After that date, no new remote net metering projects would be approved.
- ❑ For the REG program, the bill would increase the annual statewide cap on new production from 40 MW to 300 MW per year.
- ❑ Community Remote Net Metering (CRNM)
 - Allows OER to file a docket with the PUC to increase the CRNM program to 40MW
 - Allows for C&I anchor tenants to receive up to 50% VNM credits and the remaining 50% must be LMI subscribers





Lead by Example

- Executive Order 23-06 – May 2023
 - Sets interim targets to align state agencies with Act on Climate goals and provide support to schools and municipalities
- Energy Supply Contracts – Electric & Gas
 - Leverages economies of scale and streamlines processes to deliver advantageous pricing for all state agencies
- State Government Energy Program
 - Utilizes state funds to supports agencies in developing and executing clean energy projects (efficiency, renewables, transportation)
- Public School Energy Equity Program
 - Leverages federal and state funds to support underserved school districts in developing and executing clean energy projects (lighting, HVAC, controls)
- Municipal Energy Program
 - Leverages federal EECBG program with additional state funds to support efficiency planning and projects in municipalities

Virtual Net Metering for State Energy Loads

- In 2019, OER went out to bid for solar projects to help offset the State's electricity loads.
- Cadmus is under contract with OER for technical assistance.
- Rhode Island has virtual net metering contracts that already offset **78%** of the current electricity load



Possible Barriers to Implementation

Interconnection Challenges

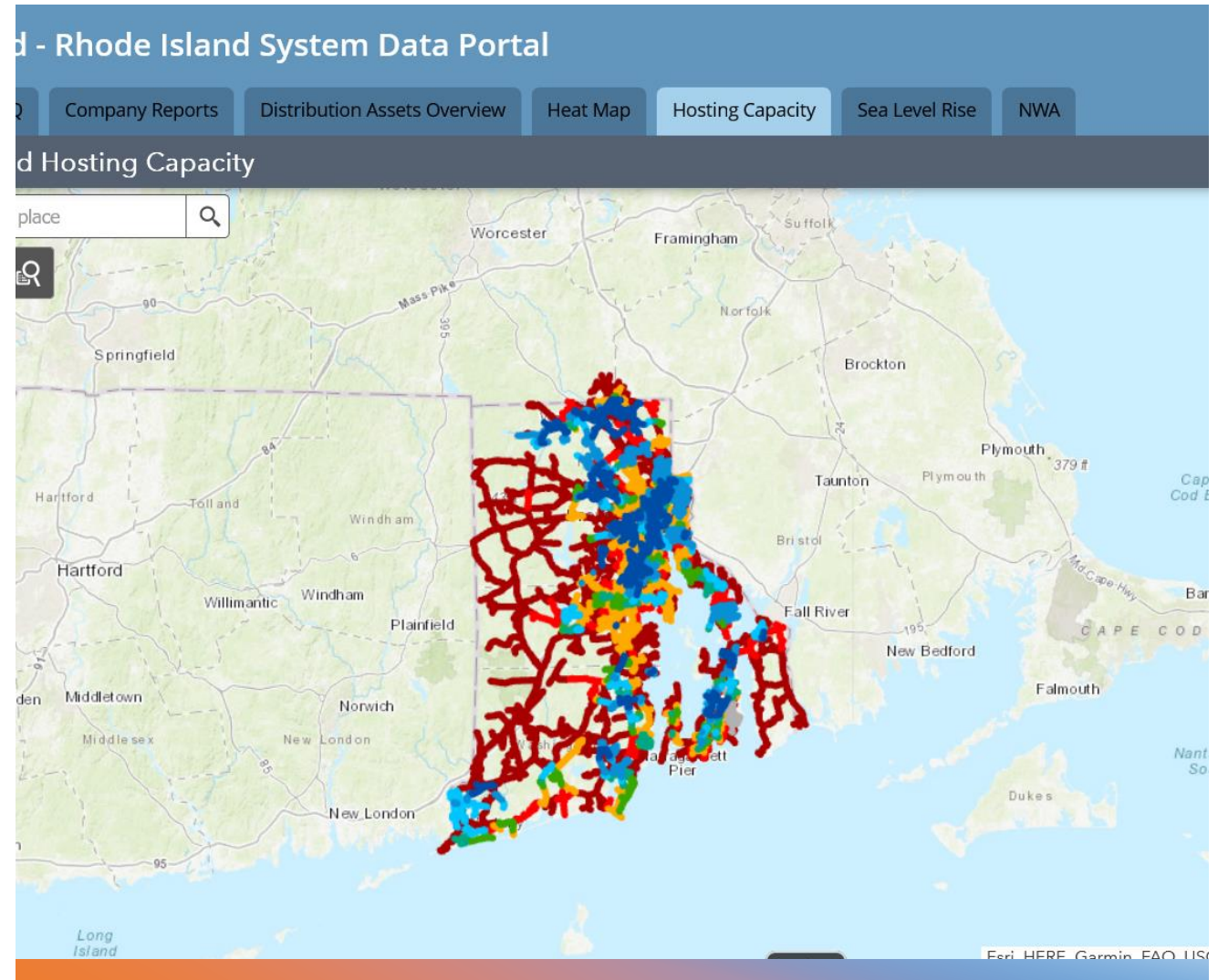
- Limited Hosting Capacity on the Electric Distribution System
- High Costs to Interconnect
- Long interconnection study timeframes

Timeline Challenges

- Lengthy timelines from Design through Construction
- Supply Chain issues, can extend timelines further

Other Challenges

- Increased Interest Rates
- Workforce



<https://systemdataportal.nationalgrid.com/RI/>



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Questions/comments?

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