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Rhode Island Works Best When We Say **UNION YES.**

March 10, 2026

Chairman Robert Britto
Senate Commerce Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony in Support of SB2346 and SB2776

Dear Chairman Britto and Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, representing more than 80,000 union members and their families across Rhode Island, we write in support of Senate Bills 2346 and 2776. Together, these bills create a competitive framework to attract data center investment to Rhode Island while ensuring that the costs and infrastructure needs associated with these facilities are responsibly managed.

Data centers are an increasingly important part of the digital economy, supporting industries such as healthcare, finance, education, and emergency services. Nationally, employment in the data center sector has grown significantly in recent years. However, during the same period, Rhode Island's data center employment declined by more than 75 percent, placing the state last in the nation in sector growth.

Across the country, thirty-nine states, including neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut, have adopted policies to attract data center investment. Without passage of these bills, Rhode Island risks missing out on significant economic development opportunities.

Senate Bill 2346 helps address this challenge by establishing a targeted incentive program through Rhode Island Commerce to attract large-scale data center investments that meet substantial capital thresholds. These projects often represent hundreds of millions of dollars in private investment and include significant construction activity through both construction and operations and maintenance phases.

A data center project in Rhode Island would represent meaningful job opportunities for the thousands of tradespeople across the Building and Construction Trades. In the construction phase of a single large-scale data center we estimate more than 1,600 construction jobs that would generate substantial wages and economic activity within the local economy.

Importantly, this legislation includes labor standards requiring prevailing wages, apprenticeship utilization, and labor peace agreements. These standards help ensure that the economic benefits of these projects support Rhode Island's skilled workforce and create high-quality jobs in the construction industry.

Additionally, Senate Bill 2776 provides important safeguards to ensure that the growth of this industry does not shift infrastructure costs onto Rhode Island ratepayers. This bill requires that data centers cover the costs of any electric generation, transmission, or distribution upgrades necessary to serve their facilities. It also establishes reporting and oversight related to water use and allows state regulators to require conservation or recycling plans where appropriate. These guardrails help to ensure responsible resource management as this industry develops.

Patrick Crowley [President](#) • Karen Hazard [Secretary-Treasurer](#)
Cheryl Masciarelli [Office Manager](#) • Autumn Guillotte [Political Director](#) • Erica Hammond [Legislative Director](#)



For these reasons the Rhode Island AFL-CIO supports both bills, and we respectfully urge the Committee to support their passage.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erica A. Hammond". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erica" being the most prominent part.

Erica A. Hammond
Legislative Director, Rhode Island AFL-CIO