



Submitted via email

April 28, 2026

The Honorable Robert Britto
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: S-2521 An Act Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers – Renewable Energy Standard

Dear Chair Britto and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Energy Resources (OER) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on S-2521. OER supports the direction of the legislation and offers the following considerations to strengthen it.

The Governor proposed a comprehensive reform to the Renewable Energy Standard (RES) in his budget recommendation for fiscal year 2027. The federal landscape in which the RES was enacted has shifted materially, most notably with the slowdown in offshore wind development. Given Rhode Island's aggressive compliance schedule, restrictive eligibility criteria, and recent federal actions from the Trump administration that have constrained new renewable supply, the cost trajectory of the RES has become unsustainable. Under current law, ratepayers are projected to pay approximately \$988 million over the next five years through 2031, with RES charges on customer bills set to triple by 2031 and quadruple by 2033.²

The Governor's recommendation would realign the RES with regional market realities while preserving long-term emissions goals. Specifically, it smooths the compliance schedule to align with the Act on Climate's 2050 target and expands eligibility to include additional lower-cost, zero-emission resources. Together, these changes would reduce costs by approximately \$572 million over five years. Other states, including Connecticut under Governor Lamont, have already adjusted their standards in response to these same market shifts.

OER appreciates that S-2521 aims to address rising RES costs by extending the 100 percent compliance target from 2033 to 2044. We welcome engagement with the sponsors and the General Assembly to determine the appropriate timeline that balances affordability with emissions-reduction goals. However, the compliance schedule is only one component of cost. The set of eligible resources is equally, if not more, consequential. Expanding eligibility to include lower-cost, zero-emission resources such as large-scale hydropower and nuclear is a key driver of the ratepayer savings in the Governor's proposal and should be a central part of this discussion.



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We support the direction of this legislation and look forward to working with the sponsors, the Committee, and the General Assembly to refine and strengthen it to best achieve its intended goal of lowering ratepayer costs, consistent with the Governor's Affordability for All agenda.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Kearns
Acting Commissioner
Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources

CC:

Senator Patalano
Members of the Senate Commerce Committee
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff