



Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.  
Business Manager

Wayne A. Tait  
President

22 Amflex Drive  
Cranston, RI 02921  
P: (401) 946-9900  
F: (401) 946-9907  
www.IBEW99.org

April 13, 2026

Senator Susan V. Sosnowski  
Chair, Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence RI 02903  
sen-sosnowski@rilegislature.gov

**Re: Opposition as written S-2801 AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- SOLAR COST REDUCTION ACT**

Dear Madam Chair,

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent over 1000 men and women who provide their skills through our vast network of signatory contractors in the Electrical Industry in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I also serve as one, if not the only, voice of the men and women who are not yet fortunate enough to be represented by an electrical labor union in the state of Rhode Island.

I am writing to you today in **Opposition as written S-2801**

I am also a Master Electrician and have been licensed as far away as Oregon as well as most of New England. I have served as a municipal electrical inspector as well as a private electrical inspector for every type of electrical installations.

I want to be very clear on this subject. I am not a fan of unnecessary delays of any sort. It is a challenge for me to understand where the difficulties may lie in obtaining a permit or receiving an inspection. Having been the recipient of close to 1000 inspections and the facilitator of a few hundred municipal inspections, I can't recall a time where either situation was an issue. A few weeks back I pulled a permit off the portal in less than three minutes and was able to get the cell phone of the inspector to set up the inspection. I also ran test applications for solar permits on the portal to see if the results would be the same and every indication was they would be. I could not complete whereas the jobs were not real, but I saw no issues to the point I could go, this was just a test. I would say that bureaucratic delays should be addressed if they are happening. Additional steps in the permit process that assure the safety of the customer and the public of course should never be undervalued.

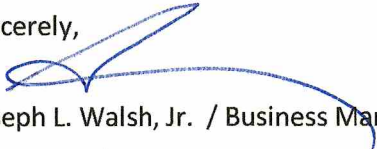
My major concern in this bill is the Virtual Inspection piece. Besides the liability strapped on the municipality now with photographic evidence on file that can be subpoenaed and easily argued in court after a injury or death, there is a wide open invitation for fraud. When I was an inspector, I often found the items the electrician did but was not interested in showing me. When I was the recipient of the inspections I was often asked for my license and questioned to be certain I was actually the person who performed the work. Many times the inspector did in fact find work unrelated to me that was performed by unlicensed persons without a permit or inspection.

It is critical the inspector is on site, in person, to review both the integrity and safety of the work performed but also to assure the person doing the work is properly licensed and insured. A person illegally borrowing or renting a license seldom has insurance nor the skills to do the work safely. This happens more often then we care to think about from houses to hotels in Rhode Island.

If inspections are actually an issue, I agree that should be resolved. In Rhode Island you can get most anywhere in 30 minutes. Typically inspectors give a modest window for arrival or text when on the way or within a 30 minute window. I would certainly be supportive of putting guidelines in for reasonable time frames and direct point of contact by cell phone to expedite. Inspectors have schedules like everyone else, if a unprepared person decided not to communicate and call 10 minutes before they need an inspection, that will remain an issue.

In conclusion, I again want to be clear, there is no time when a customer should experience unwarranted delays. Delays for safety, compliance and such are most likely still necessary but should not be any big issue as far as time goes. There are no emergency solar installations so there should be never be a situation that a reasonable time cannot be scheduled to get the inspections completed. I would request that the virtual inspection component be removed from this bill and I would then be supportive. I would also be willing to work for a solution in legislation or out to assure expedient in person inspections.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. / Business Manager  
cc:  
Siena Coia / Committee Clerk  
Committee Members  
Paul MacDonald / Local 99 Lobbyist  
BuildRI  
RI AFL-CIO