



Submitted via email

April 15, 2026

The Honorable V. Susan Sosnowski
Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: S-2801 Act Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers – Solar Cost Reduction Act

Dear Chair Sosnowski and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Energy Resources (OER) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on S-2801. OER supports this legislation. For over a decade, OER has worked with the Rhode Island solar industry on soft cost reductions. In 2017, OER worked with the General Assembly to create a statewide municipal building and electric permit which went into effect on January 1, 2018.

This legislation continues the important work on solar permitting and further reduces solar soft costs. The legislation would codify some of the work that OER is already doing such as creating a central repository of municipal solar ordinances. In 2025, OER expanded the existing repository to include energy storage ordinances as well as solar. Additionally, this legislation would create a streamlined process for updating the repository consistently when a municipality makes a change to their existing ordinances.

Additionally, this legislation also brings municipal inspections in line with industry best practices related to allowing remote virtual inspections for residential solar systems. Catching deficiencies in electrical wiring for both solar and especially energy storage systems is important and allowing virtual inspections will increase the safety of these systems and maximize the time municipal inspectors spend conducting inspections. Finally, this legislation would require OER to integrate a statewide smart solar permitting platform into the existing solar permit process.

However, OER respectfully requests the implementation of this section of the legislation be amended to December 31, 2027, to ensure OER has enough time to update the current solar permitting rules and regulations. For these reasons, OER respectfully requests that the Committee pass this legislation with the requested amendment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chris Kearns

Acting Commissioner



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CC:

Senator Valverde

Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture

Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff