



**TO:** Chair Sosnowski and Honorable Members of the Rhode Island Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee

**FROM:** Vote Solar

**RE:** Solar Cost Reduction Act

**DATE:** April 14, 2026

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Vote Solar is a nonprofit organization that works state by state to repower our communities with sunshine and build a thriving clean economy with affordable solar energy for all. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important matter. We proudly represent 1,546 members in Rhode Island.

Vote Solar strongly supports the Solar Cost Reduction Act, S.2801 (Valverde) / H.7726 (Boylan), which would implement smart permitting for residential solar to streamline deployment and reduce soft costs for simple projects that meet all building, code, and safety standards. The free permitting software authorized by this bill is being used in [over 300 jurisdictions](#) nationwide with great success, and similar legislation has been adopted in Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and California. It's time for Rhode Island to follow suit.

Residential rooftop solar is a key to our affordable and resilient energy future. It lowers utility bills \$3,900 per year and \$96,000 over the lifetime of a system, with [average annual savings of 88%](#). Despite the demonstrated value of rooftop solar, “soft cost” barriers like permitting delays can account for over 50% of residential solar system costs, slowing project timelines and raising prices for consumers. This means that projects face uncertainty, higher cost of capital, and even cancellation. Cutting red tape through smart permitting is a way for Rhode Island to keep rooftop solar within reach of families at no cost. Smart permitting costs states and municipalities nothing, and it frees up staff time for other priorities.

Rooftop solar not only lowers costs for those who install it, but for all ratepayers. Vote Solar's study with Synapse demonstrated over \$1B of savings for ratepayers across New England, thanks to the ability of local solar to suppress wholesale energy prices, lower peak demand, and reduce the need for costly infrastructure upgrades. As Rhode Island pursues its 100% renewable future and net-zero emissions requirements as set out by the Act on Climate in 2021, rooftop solar is an essential way to get there affordably. With electric bills that are [46% higher](#) than the national average and a [vast amount of technical rooftop solar potential](#), The Solar Cost Reduction Act is a win-win. The bill modernizes permitting and inspection processes for residential solar and small-scale systems, reducing administrative delays while maintaining safety standards. Let's cut solar red tape and make it easier and cheaper to harness the power of the sun to power Rhode Island homes and small-scale systems.

Thank you for your consideration.

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