

**Via Electronic Filing**

February 10, 2026

The Honorable Senator Louis P. DiPalma  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

**re: Testimony of Advanced Energy United Opposing Article 11 of House Bill  
7127 Related to Affordability**

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of Advanced Energy United related to Governor McKee’s proposed appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, House Bill 7127 (“Budget proposal” or “Budget”). Energy affordability is a key challenge facing Rhode Island that will require a set of policy interventions that embrace—not repel—advanced energy technologies that can power both our electric grid and our economy.

Advanced Energy United (“United”) is a national industry association representing businesses that provide the full range of advanced energy and transportation solutions. We advocate for public policies that enable competition and work alongside our member companies to create economic opportunity, lower consumer costs, and bolster energy reliability and resilience across the country. Together, we are united in our mission to create an economy built on advanced energy.

Like countless households and businesses across the country, Rhode Island communities are increasingly stressed by high energy bills. There is no single driver behind the rise of energy expenses and there is certainly no silver bullet answer to overcome this challenge. A combination of increasing energy demand, aging infrastructure, expensive imported fuels, industries in transition, and recent inflation all contribute to upward pressure on energy costs.

Our greatest concern relates to Section 10 of Article 11 of the Budget which introduces a new “grid access fee” that will be disastrous for local clean energy development. As proposed, the grid access fee would be charged to all net-metered systems and community remote net metered systems in Rhode Island. If adopted as written, this new fee could be applied

retroactively to existing energy system that already have met statutory obligations and secured project financing; this new fee is cause for alarm because developers may not be able to change their compensation structure to accommodate this additional cost

This new grid-access fee is not only a problem for clean energy developers, it will also become a deterrent for anyone who wants to do business in Rhode Island. Investors need predictability and rate certainty. Changing the underlying costs and imposing fees *after* project requirements have already been met and approved threatens local economic and energy development. Article 11 undermines access to competitive, affordable energy options. In effect, that hurts local workers, local energy buyers such as municipalities, universities, local businesses and more, and it's also a threat to the reliability of our energy system because it deters development of new resources.

Additionally, the Budget includes other consequential changes that will undermine clean energy development and future energy affordability in Rhode Island. The proposed, artificial cap for the energy efficiency program budget in Section 3 of Article 11 is a disservice to all ratepayers because these programs provide benefits to participants and non-participants. The efficiency programs have a strong track record of helping households and businesses manage their energy consumption and save on energy costs. We also advise caution while contemplating major changes to the state's renewable energy standard and allocation of programmatic funds, as presented in sections 7, 8, 9, and 10 of Article 11.

We must be clear that clean energy resources will be vital to mitigating current and future energy affordability issues. Clean energy resources are not the drivers of increased energy costs. Efforts to prematurely stifle development of distributed energy resources will only exacerbate the affordability problem. United strongly encourages policymakers to use this legislation to make smart investments in our energy infrastructure and to transition away from resources that drive up energy bills, namely combustion fuels such as natural gas. The Ocean State is heavily reliant on gas for both electricity and for heating, and therefore subject to significant price volatility.

Clean energy resources serve as a critical investment in our economy and workforce and serve as our strongest tool to combat climate change and curb the rising costs associated with continued use of expensive fuel resources. Whether Rhode Island maintains the status quo or takes new action, there is a cost to every decision. Several provisions within Article 11 of the Budget proposal reflect a backslide on policies and programs that make our energy system more reliable and efficient. We support efforts to think creatively and deliberately about opportunities to encourage healthy market competition while maintaining progress on the clean energy transition.



Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and your continued leadership.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kat Burnham', written in a cursive style.

Kat Burnham  
Senior Principal, Advanced Energy United

