

February 10, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

Senator Louis P. DiPalma
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Testimony in Opposition to certain provisions in HB 7127, *An Act Making Appropriations for the Support of the State for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2027*

Dear Chair DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Michelle Carpenter. I am a Rhode Island resident and have worked in the clean energy sector, both in and outside the state, for nearly 20 years. I am here to express strong opposition to provisions in the Governor's FY2027 budget that fundamentally change Rhode Island's net metering and solar policies.

Section 10 of Article 11 does not simply adjust incentives going forward. It changes the rules on operating solar projects that were lawfully developed under existing statutes and regulations. Projects were financed, built, and contracted based on state approved programs. Changing those rules after the fact breaks contracts, strands millions of dollars in public and private investment, and undermines confidence that Rhode Island is a state where policy commitments are honored.

The budget also harms the very customers it claims to protect. Virtual net metering primarily serves municipalities, school districts, hospitals, nonprofits, affordable housing providers, and low- and moderate-income customers. Locking net metering credits to July rates, which are the lowest of the year, directly reduces their expected savings and increases operating costs for these entities, placing additional strain on local budgets and ratepayers.

The proposed "grid access fee" is a clear case of double charging. Solar projects already paid for grid upgrades as required by law and by utility interconnection studies. Those costs were borne upfront. This new fee forces projects to pay every month, indefinitely, for the same infrastructure. That is not cost recovery; it is punitive.

These combined changes will push many existing projects into financial distress. In some cases, projects will operate at a monthly loss, forcing shutdowns, contract defaults, or higher charges to customers who were promised savings. These outcomes are not speculative they are the direct result of the bill's math.

This approach also exposes the state to significant legal risk. Maine enacted a similar policy and is now facing federal litigation from more than 100 companies. Rhode Island is inviting the same outcome, with taxpayers ultimately bearing the cost.

More broadly, this bill is antibusiness and undermines investor confidence. It sends a clear message that Rhode Island can change the rules after capital has been deployed and contracts have been signed. That makes long term infrastructure investment risky and directly threatens future investment in energy storage and other grid support resources the State is working to develop.

Finally, this budget is incompatible with Rhode Island's energy and climate goals. Solar is one of the fastest and lowest cost resources available today. Weakening the existing solar market makes emissions reductions, grid reliability, and affordability harder to achieve.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject these provisions and pursue energy policy through transparent, prospective legislation, not through retroactive budget language that harms ratepayers, municipalities, and Rhode Island's credibility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michelle Carpenter

Michelle Carpenter

Founder

CM Renewables, LLC

781-325-2884

cmrenewables@gmail.com