

Dear Chair DiPalma, members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Amendment #7 to H-7127. I am the co-lead of Climate Action Rhode Island's Yes to Wind campaign, and professionally I serve as an energy policy analyst. I am also a father, and a Rhode Island resident.

I am specifically writing in opposition to the amendments to Rhode Island's Renewable Energy Standard (RES).

As was the case in previous proposals by the McKee Administration to gut Rhode Island's renewable energy programs, this move to gut the RES fails to consider for the substantial benefits of offshore wind in terms of local jobs and economic development, increased electricity system reliability, improved air quality, and emissions reductions that renewable energy brings.

But more centrally, it addresses a real problem - rising utility costs - with a false solution based on demonstrably false premises. And these are supported by many false, misleading, and unsupported claims and statements.

The first and most central fiction put forward by the McKee Administration is that gutting the RES will lower costs, when in reality it will further expose us to the high and volatile costs of imported fossil fuels.

As noted in my previous testimony, per RIE's own estimates spending on renewable energy programs represented only 13% of the average Rhode Island Energy utility bill in the winter of 2024-2025. The RES was only 3.5% of utility bills, or \$6 per month for the average customer.<sup>1</sup>

This portion has only increased marginally since that time, and RIE has failed to provide underlying data behind its claims of cost increases over the next few years. If anything, RES costs are likely to stabilize as the Revolution Wind plant comes online and floods Rhode Island Energy's compliance obligations with Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). Assuming the same level of output per turbine as the adjacent South Fork Wind Farm, RECs from the Revolution Wind project will meet more than half of RIE's RES obligations for the next few years.

But even were Revolution Wind further delayed, the changes to the RES seek to eke out tiny savings from this portion of utility bills by ignoring the much larger portions of customer bills that purchases of wholesale electricity (44%) and utility spending on infrastructure (34%) represent.<sup>2</sup> Even worse, it would actively hamper our ability to contain costs.

Costs on the "supply" portion of customer bills, which is the largest portion in winter months, are high due to two reasons. First, prices on the ISO-New England wholesale market are almost entirely set by the cost of natural gas as a fuel in power plants. We have a constrained supply of natural gas and its price fluctuates wildly both due to variations in local demand - particularly in the winter - and global events, as was seen in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.<sup>3</sup>

Second, as in the case in other New England states, the supply contracts that Rhode Island Energy signs with a small group of electricity wholesalers represent costs that can be significantly higher than wholesale market prices. In Massachusetts these effects were found to

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<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Energy, Discussion on Electric Rates, February 2025, slide 14

<sup>2</sup> Rhode Island Energy, Discussion on Electric Rates, February 2025, slides 13, 17, and 18

<sup>3</sup> [ISO New England website, Markets](#)

be an order of magnitude higher than effects from the cost of the RES program.<sup>4</sup> There is forthcoming research on this topic from a major energy research firm that I will be happy to share with this committee when it is published.

The estimates from research which I have made publicly available and shared with members of the General Assembly indicate that if Revolution Wind had been online for the past year, it would have reduced RIE bills by more than \$2 per month.<sup>5</sup> This is more than 1/3 the cost that the entirely removing the RES would represent, from a single project. These numbers do not capture the full savings, as they do not include the price suppression effect of this project on the wholesale market, reduced capacity payments to generators, or other wholesale market effects that are documented in other reports.<sup>6</sup>

My findings echo the multiple studies that find that Revolution Wind and other offshore wind projects will result in savings for New England ratepayers.<sup>7</sup> And it echoes findings that solar has likewise reduced costs for New England ratepayers.<sup>8</sup>

However, my calculations assumes that electricity was sold on the wholesale market. But if RIE used this electricity to meet its load obligations, the savings would be much higher. I will be happy to share updated information on those calculations when I have finished them, and I look forward to sharing more information on these matters with your committee.

If the McKee Administration's true aim was to reduce prices for consumers, it would address these problems by requiring that our utility procure more affordably-priced zero carbon supply under long-term, fixed-price contracts. To maximize the savings to electricity customers, it would further require that Rhode Island Energy use this supply to offset a portion of the inflated prices from wholesale suppliers to meet load, instead of reselling the power.

If the McKee Administration further wanted to reduce utility rates, it would remove the gross earnings tax on utility bills, which at 4% of the average bill is larger than the entire cost of the RES program.<sup>9</sup>

To sum, the McKee Administration has both not provided transparent accounting of its claims of cost savings, nor has it addressed the glaring hole in its logic by not looking at the future costs of prolonging our over-dependence on imported natural gas. As such, it panders to a utility holding company in Pennsylvania that profits from our ongoing dependence on gas. But it has not provided a solution for the pressing energy problems of our state or to address high electric bills. As such, I urge you to reject this proposal.

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<sup>4</sup> Synapse Energy Economics, [Overcharged](#), January 2026

<sup>5</sup> Climate Action Rhode Island, [Revolution Wind Ratepayer Savings](#), April 2026

<sup>6</sup> Daymark Energy Advisors, [Value of Wind in 2024-2025](#), September 2024, Power Advisory, [Assessment of Revolution Wind Power Purchase Agreements](#), March 2026

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, Synapse Energy Economics, [Charting the Wind](#), June 2024

<sup>8</sup> Synapse Energy Economics, [New England Solar Savings](#), December 2020

<sup>9</sup> Rhode Island Energy, Discussion on Electric Rates, February 2025, slide 24