



Testimony is opposition to H7127, Section 11: Articles 3, 7, and 10.

February 10, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Chair DiPalma and Senate Finance Committee Members,

I am Jeff Migneault, executive director of Climate Action RI. CARI is a grassroots organization of Rhode Islanders who are dedicated to the just transition to clean, renewable energy. We have well over 4,000 supporters, and that number is growing with both the growing urgency of the climate crises and that supporting clean, science-based, affordable renewable energy is part and parcel of standing up to the retrograde, non-sensical, unamerican policies of the Trump administration.

I am writing in this capacity to voice our strong opposition to the cuts to renewable energy programs contained in the proposed 2027 budget. These cuts include a 17-year delay to the Renewable Energy Standard (Article 11, Section 7), a proposal to add a grid access fee to large-scale solar, (Article 11, Section 10), and a cap on energy efficiency programs. (Article 11, Section 3)

In total these changes to our support of renewable energy are impractical and short-sighted, cynical, and immoral.

They are **impractical and short-sighted** as they will not make energy more affordable for Rhode Islanders. They might temporarily reduce some fees on electrical bills, but the main drivers of the cost of electricity are the supply and distribution charges, totaling about 75% of electric bills. Increasing the supply of low-cost renewable energy reduces our reliance on increasingly expensive and volatile fossil fuels. This has been proven the world over and, in the U.S., where states with the highest reliance on renewable energy having the lowest costs. The Governor says he has no control over these costs, when state policies have large impacts on these costs.

Energy efficiency programs, which this budget greatly underfunds (Section 3), have reduced energy demand by nearly 20% since 2005 compared to what was expected*. Not only has this saved money for those individuals that have taken advantage of these programs, but by reducing demand, has reduced the whole sale cost of electricity and the need for distribution upgrades.

These energy efficiency savings along with the increase in the use of renewable energy not only reduces the cost of energy, but has many other benefits for Rhode Island that should not be ignored. These include improvements to air quality, especially the levels of fine particulate matter. It is increasingly being shown that this pollution has large health effects including increasing the rates of heart attacks, strokes, cancer, lung disease, still born and premature births. This pollution disproportionately affects low-income areas. Other benefits include the jobs that are created by these industries including solar installers, electricians, insulators, and those that work on wind farms.

Additionally, it is estimated that Rhode Island spends 2.7 billion dollars each year on fossil fuels, all of which leaves the state. The more energy we produce in RI the more that money supports our economy.

These proposals are a **cynical** election year attempt to hoodwink the RI public by citing only the costs of these programs while ignoring the substantial savings they provide now and into the future. The Governor claims this budget increases transparency when it does the opposite, highlighting only one aspect of the energy market, while hiding others. He thinks the public will fall for it. Make no mistake that we and other advocates for a sensible just energy transition will go all out to provide this information to the citizens of Rhode Island.

Although the reasons stated above make a sufficient case for opposing these changes, I also want to briefly point out that the impact of these sections of the Governor's proposed budget are **immoral** in several ways. This budget caves into the agenda of the Trump administration when it is a moral imperative to stand up to his agenda in any way possible. And it is immoral to abandon our efforts and leadership to address the climate crises, especially for the false reason of improving the affordability of our energy supply. The vast majority of Americans are concerned about the climate crisis and the world we are creating for future generations. For RI to abandon its leadership position in service of the interest of the utility and fossil fuel companies is abdication of our responsibility to ourselves, our children, and the world.

To be clear, we do not hold the position that there are no changes to our renewable energy programs that might be beneficial, but they should be carefully considered and the result of in-depth public discussion, and be done with care, not a chainsaw.

Please oppose these sections of the proposed 2027 budget.

Respectively yours,

Jeff Migneault
Executive Director
Climate Action Rhode Island

* <https://eec.ri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-EEC-Annual-Report.pdf>