

February 10, 2026
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair DiPalma, First Vice Chair Ciccone, Second Vice Chair Felag, Secretary Acosta, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to provide you with my comments regarding House Bill No. H7127

My first comment is in regard to the proposed 17-year delay to the Renewable Energy Standard (Article 11, Section 7).

Any delay is unacceptable. Delaying the 100% Renewable Energy Standard 2033 to 2050 is more than unacceptable, it is irresponsible and a complete disservice to the people of Rhode Island. It will prolong the state's exposure to costly, volatile natural gas, defer and divert major job creation opportunities, and jeopardize Rhode Island's ability to meet its economy-wide emission reduction targets.

My second comment is in regard to a proposal to add a grid access fee to large-scale solar (Article 11, Section 10).

The institution of a monthly and in perpetuity grid access fee, along with reduced compensation rates for large renewable energy projects (1 MW or greater), is a slap in the face for both solar and wind turbine developers and all of us. It is a major disincentive signaling that Rhode Island is closed for clean energy business. The retroactive nature of the changes (on both existing and new net metering systems) would have a severe chilling effect on the industry at large, implying that Rhode Island's public policies are not predictable and reliable enough to earn the confidence of investors. A page right out of the book of the Trump administration in their battle against clean/renewable energy and in favor of fossil fuel producers. Something doesn't smell right here!

As stated by Emily Koo of the Acadia Center, *"There are sound, data-driven ways to reform incentive and compensation structures over time, but this proposal takes a cudgel to foundational programs. Instead, a thorough, methodical, and stakeholder-informed process before the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) should determine how Rhode Island's renewable policies can and should evolve to best serve ratepayer interests and preserve a stable project investment environment to attract new clean power to the state."*

My third comment is in regard to imposing a cap on energy efficiency programs (Article 11, Section 3).

The budget proposal caps Rhode Island's cost-effective energy efficiency programs at \$75 million per year, which is alarming 24% below the 2026 planned investment levels and 48% below the average of the past five years (both adjusted for inflation).

In addition to directly lowering energy bills, energy efficiency is one of the most cost effective ways to reduce energy costs for all consumers – like me (which is why I was able to use rebate from Clear River Electric and Water District (CREW) to insulate my attic after installation of a heat pump system in our house) - and supports the local economy, as well as combating climate change.

The budget's proposed bond for energy efficiency is neither an assured nor consistent source of funding, nor is it close to the magnitude needed to restore funding levels, especially considering the Trump administration's cuts to these programs.

In addition, the Governor's budget proposal slashes support for municipalities, businesses and residents to access financial and technical assistance for clean energy projects such as energy efficiency, solar, or electric vehicles.

My fourth comment is in regard to the affordability crisis.

How is it that the cutting of a line item that is only 3.5% of the overall bill for electricity going to solve the electricity affordability crisis when the cost of supply is the issue here, and your budget proposal with its disincentives towards renewable energy simply makes this much more costly, not less. By RI Energy's own accounting, all renewable energy programs together represent 12.9% of the bill. Whereas the "supply" portion of the bill, which represents wholesale power purchases, is 44.3% - more than 3X as much as the overall cost of renewable energy programs and the cost for the renewable energy standard, which you are focusing on, is only 3.5% of customer bills. You are focusing on the wrong portion of the process!

My fifth comment is in regard to the inclusion of nuclear energy (Article 11, Section 7). Including nuclear energy as a clean energy source is quite misleading. What about the fact that we still have not addressed the issue of spent nuclear fuel?

According to the posting on the U.S. Governmental Accountability Office about nuclear waste disposal: "Spent nuclear fuel. The nation has over 90,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear power plants. DOE is responsible for disposing of this high-level waste in a permanent geologic repository but has yet to build such a facility because policymakers have been at an impasse over what to do with this spent fuel since

2010. As a result, the amount of spent nuclear fuel stored at nuclear power plants across the country continues to grow by about 2,000 metric tons a year. Meanwhile, the federal government has paid billions of dollars in damages to utilities for failing to dispose of this waste and may potentially have to pay tens of billions of dollars more in coming decades.”

Overall, the cutting of renewables and energy efficiency will be a major blow to Rhode Island’s clean energy economy. This budget proposal is both short-sighted – it won’t lead to more affordable and reliable electricity. In fact, it will do just the opposite. It is a disservice to the people and businesses of Rhode Island. It also disregards a primary reason for the clean energy transition: to shield residents from volatile gas prices and keep at least \$2.7 billion per year in fossil fuel spending in the local economy rather than sending it out of state.

Additionally, it is not at all transparent and seems to be a cynical election ploy. Finally, it is immoral, seemingly caving into the Trump agenda instead of standing up to it, and abandoning doing our part to address the climate crisis, thus helping instead to put the future of all of us, all life on earth, at risk.

The Governor’s budget proposal locks Rhode Island into an outdated energy system and strips us of our most potent tools to address skyrocketing energy costs and, most importantly, it prevents Rhode Island from doing its part to address the Climate Crisis by locking us into an antiquated 20th century system at a time when the programs he wants to cut are an investment in a 21st century system that will control costs into the future.

Therefore, I urge you to reject these portions of the proposed budget and instead adopt the necessary modifications to get us where we need to be, now and into the future, while truly reducing the current high costs for energy via the use of clean renewable energy.

Sincerely,

David A. Brunetti
Burrillville, RI