

[SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov)

Testimony opposing [Article 11 Section 3](#) and [Article 11 Section 7](#) of House Bill No. 7127

(Governor) ENTITLED, AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE STATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2027

**From:** Dr. Barbara Sullivan-Watts, 2 Locust Drive, Kingston, RI 02881

Date of Hearing: Feb 10, 2026

**To:** Chair DiPalma and the Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee

I am oceanographer, climate science educator, and State Coordinator for Rhode Island [Citizens Climate Lobby](#) whose primary interest is lowering heat trapping emissions to meet RI State Law, the Act on Climate. We also understand the need for affordable energy. Energy costs and that this is a complicated issue as we transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to one depending more on renewable energy. Here we offer what we have found in our research about costs of renewable energy and fossil fuels as they relate to Rhode Island. Two points we hope the Governor keeps in mind are 1) Renewable energy worldwide is becoming less expensive, 2) the very least expensive energy is the energy we don't use via efficiency measures.

Thus, we believe [Article 11 Section 3](#) which Caps energy efficiency program budgets a \$75M is a penny wise, pound foolish measure. Energy efficiency is one of the best ways to ensure ratepayers are comfortable in their homes and can reduce their energy demand. Capping budgets reduces the benefits that come with investment - like energy savings and job creation. The energy efficiency program should not have a new cap.

Regarding [Article 11 Section 7](#) which amends compliance with the Renewable Energy Standard (RES) by extending it 17 years from 2033 to 2050. Although the near-term picture of what will drive costs of electricity is uncertain, long term estimates indicate decreases in costs of renewable energy. Our position is that we should be very cautious about removing RI state policies on renewable energy standards. The standards currently speak to the future of the energy transition that is occurring because of [worldwide economic forces](#). In comparison, natural gas prices, the fuel that Rhode Island is currently heavily dependent on, are predicted by the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#) to rise. Moreover, as soon as Revolution Wind is online, it will help reduce energy costs. Maine has produced a state report showing that currently it is natural gas prices that dominate increases, which would also apply to RI.

<https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/fossil-fuels/whats-driving-up-maines-energy-bills>

The Rhode Island chapter of [Citizens Climate Lobby](#) is an all volunteer, non-partisan organization seeking legislative measures that will result in a habitable planet for our children and grandchildren. We remind you that the goal of 100% by 2033 RES is a foundational component to RI's ability to meet the Act on Climate, as detailed in the 2025 Climate Action Strategy. The costs of climate change are already increasing for Rhode Islanders, for example extreme weather events that affect our shoreline and rivers; shifts in the distribution of fish and lobster that affect our fishermen; increasing costs of cooling our buildings in summer, to name a few. Every penny we spend now to stave off more climate change is a wise investment in future savings.