



Feb 10, 2026

Dear Senators,

My name is Michael Lucini. I am a resident of Warren, and the President of Endurance Clean Energy in Bristol. Our company develops community and net-metering solar projects throughout the region. We submit this testimony in opposition to changes to net-metering proposed in the Governor's budget bill.

The retroactive nature of the bill as it applies to systems in operation and under development is unacceptable. We as local developers rely on consistent, predictable, and forward-looking law and policy to make business decisions. For example, we have spent hundreds-of-thousands of dollars on local consultants in various disciplines to develop a new, 3.66-megawatt system in Smithfield that should start construction this spring. This project is sited on a former quarry and adjacent to a Superfund site and is therefore a "preferred site" under net-metering law. We have signed a contract with and paid a deposit to Rhode Island energy and received Master Plan approval from the town. By any reasonable standard, this project should be sufficiently mature to be exempted from changes effected by new law or policy.

However, due to this backwards-looking bill, the project is now entirely at risk. Our company will lose our entire investment. Smithfield will not receive \$31,110 in annual taxes. Local union labor will not build the project, the landowner will not receive rent payments, off-takers will not receive bill savings, and the land will remain completely unproductive.

The bill naively plays directly into the Trump Administration's efforts to undermine renewable energy projects. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act requires projects to start construction before July 4, 2026 to receive the 30% federal investment tax credit. In response, other states have wisely accelerated solar deployment while the federal subsidy exists. But Rhode Island has foolishly frozen its solar industry with this bill. The net result is that Rhode Island taxpayers will subsidize projects in other states but not receive the benefits for themselves. It is therefore critically important that retroactive changes to projects under development be removed from the bill as soon as possible, so that we can secure this federal funding.

Rhode Island aims to build a nascent energy storage industry, which has tremendous potential to deliver more ratepayer benefits than any proposed gutting of net-metering could do. However, we as local developers will hesitate to make future investments in our home state if it proves willing to make detrimental changes to systems in operation or under development. That sentiment is shared by the investors who finance, own, and operate both

solar and energy storage systems. If it passes this anti-solar bill, Rhode Island will also stop its energy storage industry before it starts and cede economic leadership to its neighbors.

Regarding the specifics of the bill, we have the following comments:

1. The “grid access fee” is illogical, arbitrary, and left open-ended to be changed by the PUC at any time. The fee purports to recover distribution costs associated with net metering systems that are borne by ratepayers. However, no such costs are borne by ratepayers, because solar projects finance the entirety of their grid interconnections. Rather, ratepayers benefit from the infrastructure improvements we pay for.

For example, we developed an 8-megawatt system off Log Road in Smithfield in 2022. We paid approximately \$2.6 million to upgrade the substation (with protection for power flow in both directions) and a >1 mile three-phase line rebuild on Log Road, with new wires, poles, pole anchors, and easements. The grid has been made significantly more resilient in the area on our dime. Yet this bogus fee would charge the system \$431,040 per year.

2. Summer rates are generally lower than winter rates, so by fixing rates on July 1, 2026, systems would be unfairly undercompensated for their winter-time production and the future value of their production. This is detrimental to off-takers, who will lose savings.
3. The General Assembly extended net metering to 2060 last **year**. It should not then reverse to 2045 just one year later, as entities have signed net metering contracts beyond that date. This is also detrimental to off-takers, who will lose savings.

All the points made regarding retroactive changes in the bill also apply to new systems. Net-metering will be completely unworkable, and so future savings, taxes, jobs, rents, and environmental benefits will never be realized. The General Assembly already has control over the program in that is limited to certain off-takers that benefit the public, or by total capacity for commercial/industrial customers and with a reduced rate, and recently by siting. Those changes were prudent, well-considered, and forward-looking. Net-metering as it exists is economically and environmentally beneficial to Rhode Island, but we are always willing to engage with stakeholders, regulators, and legislators to examine programs in good faith and on a forward-looking basis.

Sincerely,

Michael Lucini
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