

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

Dear Chair DiPalma and Finance Committee Members,

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

I am concerned primarily with Section 7, Section 10, and Section 3 of Article 11, which would respectively delay the Renewable Energy Standard by 17 years, add a grid access fee to large-scale solar, and cap spending on energy efficiency programs.

I understand that the governor has included these as part of his "Affordability for All" campaign, hoping to cut fees that are burdening taxpayers. However, it is impossible to argue in good faith that these changes will help cut costs for Rhode Islanders. Rather, renegeing on environmental commitments will lead to increased reliance on increasingly expensive and volatile oil and natural gas. This budget deceives Rhode Islanders by promising short term relief, when the strategies being used to obtain it will only drive energy prices up even higher in the years to come. It is cruel to prey on the panic of debt-stressed Rhode Islanders to pass policies that hurt them.

On the topic of the Renewable Energy Standard (Article 11, Section 7), I would like to point out that pushing back the target means we will not, in any scenario, meet our Act on Climate goals. The underwhelming 2025 Climate Action Strategy relies almost entirely on skyrocketing electric vehicle usage in the next 5 years. Pushing back the RES would mean the energy powering these electric vehicles would not be renewable until the year we're supposed to meet net-zero. I would be disappointed to realize, with the approval of this budget, that the Act on Climate was a publicity stunt. We do have the capacity to both meet our current climate goals, and lower energy costs for Rhode Islanders, if we pass better policy.

I urge you to reject Section 7, Section 10, and Section 3 of Article 11 of the proposed budget.
With hope and good faith,

Miko Lehnert
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(lifelong Rhode Islander, Brown '27)