

Trafton testimony in behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island supporting S2248 - Senate Finance Committee, May 21, 2026.

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Committee Members,

I'm Peter Trafton from Providence, Co-VP of Policy for the Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) writing in strong **support of S 2248**, by Senator Sosnowski and colleagues.

Once again this year, many Rhode Islanders are attempting to pass a bill that creates a percentage of income payment plan (PIPP) for designated low-income utility customers. That is the purpose of S2248. With each year, the costs of electricity and gas energy are increasing. For customers with low income, the costs of energy require a higher and higher percentage of their available funds. The need for a bill like the PIPP is becoming progressively more burdensome.

A novel excuse has been offered by Rhode Island Energy (RIE), the company that took over Narragansett Electric 3 full years ago. RIE's holding company in Pennsylvania has a program similar to the proposed PIPP. RIE says it will offer a revised low income discount rate proposal, now a part of an ongoing rate case. The rate case is unlikely to be resolved prior To This Fall. It is not clear whether the RIE proposal or the PIPP specified in S2248 will offer a better option for needy Rhode Islanders. We've been asking for a PIPP for years.

To ensure that our neighbors are protected during the coming winter, **ECRI supports your passing 2248**, with an amendment if necessary to ensure that the better program be instituted.

Thanks very much for considering my comments in ECRI's behalf.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Trafton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Trafton, Co-VP for Policy
The Environment Council of Rhode Island