

SB-2248
PUC
Neutral



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Public Utilities Commission

89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, Rhode Island 02888
(401) 941-4500

Chairman Ronald T. Gerwatowski
Commissioner Abigail Anthony
Commissioner Karen M. Bradbury

May 21, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chair, Senate Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Senate Bill 2248 – Percentage of Income Payment Plan

Dear Chair DiPalma:

I am submitting the following comments on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on Senate Bill 2248, which creates a percentage of income payment rate for eligible electric and gas customers. This bill provides the PUC with authority, and mandates Rhode Island Energy to implement a tiered percentage of income rate. The framework in the bill is reflective of the New Hampshire percentage of income payment plan but without the “first come, first served” nature that comes from fixed budget. Additionally, the framework builds on the structure and enrollment features of the current low-income rates to hopefully limit the administrative costs.

In the past, the PUC has been supportive of the bill as drafted. Last year, the PUC suggested the legislature monitor Rhode Island Energy’s rate case to understand if they would offer a percentage of income rate like the one offered by PPL in Pennsylvania. They did not. Instead, they have offered an enhanced tiered discount for eligible electric customers and continuation of the previously approved two-tiered discount for eligible gas customers.

Because the rate case is pending before the PUC and the proposals between the legislation and the rate case are inconsistent, the PUC requests that for efficiency, any new legislative policy decision be made prior to the start of evidentiary hearings on June 1, 2026. The reason is that it would be costly for the utility to implement multiple billing system changes in two years.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 401-780-2147 or cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias
Chief of Legal Services

Copy: Senator Sosnowski