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5.12.26

Senator Louis P. DiPalma
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903
sen-dipalma@rilegislature.gov

***Re: Support for S 3272; An Act Relating to Public Utilities and Carriers --
Renewable Energy Standard***

***Opposition as drafted to H 7127; An Act Relating to Making Appropriations for
the Support of the State for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2027 – Article 11,
Section 10***

Dear Chairman DiPalma

As Business Manager of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 99, I represent over 1000 men and women who provide their skills through our vast network of signatory contractors in the Electrical Industry in the State of Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. I would also refer to those working members I represent, as well as my 300 retirees, as ratepayers for this conversation.

I am writing to you today in ***Support of S-3272 and opposition as drafted of H-7127***

I believe that S-3272 improves some harmful language in H-7127 Article 11, Section 10 that would be detrimental to our renewable goals and therefore S-3272 removes and impediment to the employment of the men and women I represent.

S-3272 provides more certainty by requiring contracts rather than the tariffs in H-7127. I do not feel any developer is going to have faith in a process that can be changed at any time with no legally binding component. Without faith there is no development, without development my people are in the unemployment line.

Although I do not enjoy the fact that the 275 MW cap we negotiated just a few years ago would now be lowered by 50 MW in S-3272, I do understand the majority of those in the industry are willing to entertain a reduction that does not exceed 50 MW. This reduction proves my tariff argument out. I do not know exactly how impactful this cap reduction will be but at least I will have time to develop other avenues of employment if the impact is significant. The 50 MW reduction will have to be acceptable to Local 99 and a nano-watt less than 225 MW is nothing we have interest in.

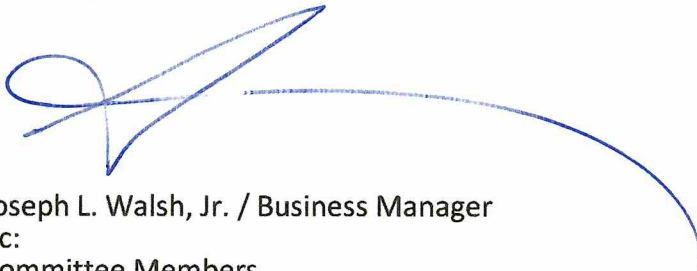
I have lived in Rhode Island my entire life and for well over 40 years, paid electric bills to the various entities that controlled the only electrical supplier in Rhode Island for most of us. I am in the same predicament as every other ratepayer, facing continually increasing utility bills as I have for the last four decades.

I also have the responsibility to keep the men and women I represented in gainful employment. Those same people are also ratepayers and if I felt renewable projects were harming their families, then I would have to step away from the conversation.

Renewable projects have been in peril for over a year now. We have watched the solar incentives deliberately be removed and off-shore wind projects shut down with no well thought out intention other than spite.

In conclusion, I respect the fact that Governor McKee wants to reduce the burden on the ratepayers, but H-7127, **as written**, will put people out of work who work on renewable installations, harm the municipal and non-profit rate payers and leave the rest of us subject to constantly increasing fees from the utility with no relief in sight. I am certain Governor is simply trying to reduce the rates of the people of Rhode Island but the language in this article is problematic both to those I represent but also to the actual goals to slowing the impacts of the changing climate. I believe that S-3272 fixes enough of the issues with H-7127 that we can at least work with it. Therefore, I urge passage of S-3272.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joseph L. Walsh, Jr.', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Joseph L. Walsh, Jr. / Business Manager

Cc:

Committee Members

Jamie Plume / Committee Clerk

Paul Macdonald / IBEW Local 99 Lobbyist

RI AFL-CIO

Climate Jobs RI

BuildRI