

**Via Electronic Mail**

March 21, 2024

Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr., Chair  
House Corporations Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, Rhode Island

**Re: NECEC Testimony in Support of House Bill H 7811 An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – 2024 Energy Storage Act; With Additional Comments on H 7808, H 7603, H 7815, H 7137, H 7426, H 7813, and H 7816**

Dear Chair Solomon and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony concerning bill H 7811, An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – 2024 Energy Storage Act. This legislation is an opportunity for Rhode Island to encourage economic development for energy storage, a necessary segment of the clean energy industry, which will enable increased deployment of renewable energy, increase grid resilience, and bring Rhode Island closer to its renewable and clean energy commitments.

The Northeast Clean Energy Council (“NECEC”) leads the just, equitable, and rapid transition to a clean energy future and a diverse climate economy. It is the only organization in the Northeast that represents the perspectives of all clean energy market segments, including—but not limited to—clean transportation, wind, solar, energy storage, and microgrids. The Council is dedicated to growing the clean energy economy in Rhode Island and across the region, in pursuit of our mission to create a world-class and equitable clean energy hub in the Northeast.

**NECEC supports bill H 7811 An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers -- 2024 Energy Storage Act.** This bill establishes two energy storage goals for Rhode Island:

- 200 MW by December 31, 2028 and
- 600 MW by December 31, 2033.

Energy storage is a necessary complementary technology with a multitude of benefits. It can enable increasing amounts of intermittent renewables like solar and wind to be used by making them more readily available on demand. It can reduce the need to fire up peaker power plants—which are known as some of the most expensive and most polluting sources of energy, despite being used only in times of the highest demand, sometimes less than 100 hours total the span of a year. Storage can also reduce transmission and distribution costs, help manage congestion, and provide grid resiliency, backup power and grid stabilization.

Many nearby states have adopted energy storage development goals. Massachusetts' goal is 1 GW by 2025<sup>1</sup> and approximately 3 GW by 2030, New York's goal is 6 GW by 2030<sup>2</sup>; Connecticut's goal is 1 GW by 2030<sup>3</sup>. This bill's goal of 600 MW by 2033 is commensurate with, and even leading among, the neighboring states when scaled to population size.

Rhode Island should not delay the deployment of energy storage systems any further. Storage systems can take multiple years to develop, so to reach its 2030 decarbonization goals, the state needs to see increased development of storage capacity now. As more clean energy comes online, concurrent storage development will enable more efficient use of time-variable energy resources.

Encouraging the development of energy storage today will support Rhode Island's ability to improve grid stability, accelerate the clean energy transition, and help the state fulfill its climate commitments, which is why we urge you to vote in favor of bill H 7811.

***NECEC would like to offer thoughts on the following bills:***

**H 7808 An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – Net Metering.** This bill, although well-intentioned, provides only some of the changes necessary to strengthen the net metering system in our state. For further improvement, the bill should remove system sizing limits, which prevent homeowners from utilizing their rooftop's full capacity and forestall potential home electrification. Secondly, the bill should clearly define the "applicable billing period" to be annual.

NECEC believes Senate Bill 2536 provides a much better set of updates to the net metering system, and could be used as a model for updating this bill.

**H 7603 Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – Residential Solar Energy Disclosure And Homeowners Bill Of Rights Act.** This bill makes some necessary updates, though NECEC sees some concerns. First, it should not impose restrictions on door-knocking hours, since many municipalities already have these rules in place, often until 7 pm or 8 pm. Setting shorter hours for solar developers will complicate enforcement and limit developers' ability to reach people at home. Second, the bill's requirement for lease providers to be licensed as lenders or financial institutions does not make sense under Rhode Island law and should be revised.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/energy-storage-initiative>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-new-framework-achieve-nation-leading-six-gigawatts-energy-storage>

<sup>3</sup> <https://portal.ct.gov/PURA/Press-Releases/2022/Connecticut-Launches-Statewide-Battery-Storage-Program>

**NECEC opposes the following bills:**

- **H 7815 An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – Renewable Energy Standard.** This bill’s design complicates and confuses the process of renewable energy installation, and adds undue burden to renewable projects. Studies have shown that the lifecycle emissions of renewable energy projects are orders of magnitude lower than those of fossil fuels.<sup>4</sup> Given this large difference, there should be no need to individually test every project, which would be a costly and onerous process.

*In addition, we urge the Committee to reject the following:*

- **H 7137** An Act Relating To Businesses And Professions – Solar Panels
- **H 7426** An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – Solar Decommissioning Plans
- **H 7813** An Act Relating To Public Utilities And Carriers – Affordable Clean Energy Security Act
- **H 7816** An Act Relating To State Affairs And Government – 2021 Act On Climate

On behalf of all of our members currently doing or seeking to do business in Rhode Island, thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you on making Rhode Island a leader in clean energy and storage development.

Sincerely,



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<sup>4</sup> See 2013 Report from NREL, “Life Cycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Electricity Generation” <https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy13osti/57187.pdf>  
Also see <https://www.carbonbrief.org/solar-wind-nuclear-amazingly-low-carbon-footprints/>