

HB-5245  
PUC



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

### Public Utilities Commission

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

Chairman Ronald T. Gerwatowski  
Commissioner Abigail Anthony

March 20, 2025

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.  
Chair, House Corporations Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 5245 – Percentage of Income Payment Rate

Dear Chair Solomon:

I am submitting the following comments on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on House Bill 5245, which creates a percentage of income payment rate for eligible electric and gas customers.

This bill provides the PUC with the authority and mandate 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. However, Rhode Island Energy is expected to file a full distribution rate case in the near future. This intervening event could occur during the setting of the initial tiers. The new tiers would only be in place for approximately six months prior to new rates being set, potentially leading to duplicative administrative costs. Because PPL in Pennsylvania has a combined PIPP with arrearage forgiveness component, the PUC suggests that it may make sense for the legislature to consider an alternative approach which would align with the upcoming rate case process. We look forward to continued discussions.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 401-780-2147 or [cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov](mailto:cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov).

Sincerely,

Cynthia G. Wilson-Frias  
Chief of Legal Services

cc: Representative Slater