

Testimony of Peter Trafton, Providence RI, in support of H5815, March 20, 2025

Dear Chair Solomon and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Corporations,

I write in strong and enthusiastic support FOR H 5815, by Representative Morales and colleagues. It establishes for Rhode Island a program to compensate intervenors who contribute substantially to the utility regulatory processes.

For years Rhode Islanders have been cowed by the ways our public utilities are managed by a commission of 3 individuals who are essentially unapproachable by the public without a team of engineers and lawyers. This is actually typical of most American states. If one does not have funding to hire engineers and lawyers, one is reduced to being a spectator.

As all Rhode Islanders should be involved with our responses to climate change, the barriers that obstruct this, as just described, must be addressed. Procedural equity is crucial, since those with the least power and resources are destined to be affected first and worst. Several states have developed plans and practices for increasing procedural equity. This is well described by a report from the Institute for policy integrity of the NYU school of Law – *Procedural Equity at Public Utility Commissions*(2024). California reviews have demonstrated beneficial and cost-saving results. Rhode Island should follow suit. We should have intervener compensation programs which ensure that public voices are heard.

Please pass Representative Morales's 5815 and help us adopt a path towards greater energy equity in the ocean state.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PG Trafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Peter Trafton