

Testimony in support of H5573: Energy Facility Siting Act

Dr. Hans Scholl, 71 Fales Avenue, Barrington, RI 02806

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To Chair Solomon and the honorable Members of the House Corporations Committee:

I support H5573 out of two reasons:

1. For evaluating applications for new energy facility projects, the bill requires siting boards to consider the net-zero mandate of chapter 6.2 of the RI 2021 Act on Climate, and how the projects may advance or delay the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions set forth in the Act. This will finally level the playing field and allow to consider the benefits of renewable energy for GHG emissions reduction, clean air and its health benefits, compared to the negative climate change impacts and GHG pollution of fossil fuel based energy.
2. The bill will lead to a quantum leap in improving our ancient transmission infrastructure, requiring to consider reconductoring with advanced conductors and power-flow, dynamic line rating, energy storage and distribution or transmission assets like battery or other energy storage systems, and grid-enhancing technologies, as further described and explained in the "Definitions" section of the bill. These technologies have not been adequately considered by our DPUC and PUC, and by the Utility, which seems to be stuck with their modernization efforts at plans for "smart meters", lagging behind what other States' do to aggressively modernize their grids.

The bill will insure that we will eventually replace the old-style conductors in our power lines with modern higher conducting alternatives that will allow to send substantially more electricity through the existing grid, while the other technologies will reduce peak demands and level the overall utilization of the grid, which will reduce use of the polluting fossil-fired "peaker" plants that currently supply these demands, leading to immediate GHG reduction.

In support of this grid modernization, the bill also asks the PUC and OER to conduct an investigation into using the above technologies and to require the Utility to implement these, if determined to be cost effective, which has potential to lower the cost of energy to the rate payers.

With its focus on grid modernization and due consideration of renewables, the bill is consistent with the other Utility reform bills that have been introduced in this year's legislation, and will add to the long over-due synergy which we urgently need to reach our GHG reduction mandates and to lower cost for the rate payers.

Please bring the bill to a vote in 2025.

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to Representative Solomon for introducing this important bill.



Dr. Hans Scholl

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71 Fales Avenue
Barrington, RI 02806; (203) 687-6415; clclt17@mac.com