

Testimony in support of H5822: Solar Siting Advisory Task Force

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

There is a severe risk to the capability of Rhode Island to meet the greenhouse gas emissions reduction mandates of the RI Act on Climate and to meet the goal of the Renewable Energy Standard to have 100% of our electricity from renewable energy generation by 2033.

In order to meet both requirements, we have to drastically reduce burning fossil fuels and to step up our generation of renewable energy from offshore wind and solar. Unfortunately, the current political climate is not favorable to do either: the federal government fights science, eradicates “climate change” from all official vocabulary, opposes renewables and has made it clear that it will not permit additional offshore wind leases—it remains uncertain if even already permitted offshore wind projects can be finished as planned.

At the same time, the fossil fuel industry stepped up their misinformation and does what they can to prolong polluting with their dirty and harmful products, and they discredit and slow down solar energy as the one technology that, especially when paired with large scale, or decentralized/distributed battery storage and grid modernization, can compensate for at least some of the possible losses of offshore wind capacity.

We have a choice to stem this foul tide of denial and misinformation, by doing expeditiously what is under our own control in Rhode Island, to help expanding solar energy development, not only to still reach the goals outlined in the first paragraph above, but also with the added benefit of reducing energy costs and price volatility for the rate payers.

H5822, if turned into law without further delay, will accelerate solar development at scale in abundantly available areas that are ill-suited for other diverse development. This will be done by implementing a task force to provide recommendations, advice and guidance to help expedite and facilitate the development of solar energy systems on eligible property owned by the state and municipalities.

Implementing the task force poses a rare opportunity to accelerate and achieve leverage at a minimal financial investment.

Please bring the bill to a vote in 2025. Waiting any longer is counterproductive and will lead to missing not only the current window in time, but also our state goals for climate and renewables—and will cost the rate payers dearly.

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



Dr. Hans Scholl

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