

2026 -- H 8226

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

COMMENDING RHODE ISLAND ENERGY AND LOCAL UTILITY WORKERS ON
RESTORATION EFFORTS DURING EXTREME WINTER WEATHER EVENTS

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Solomon, Chippendale,
Paplauskas, Casimiro, Casey, Kennedy, Ajello, and Shallcross Smith

Date Introduced: March 03, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Extreme weather patterns present serious risk to the wellbeing of Rhode
2 Islanders and their property, as well as to vital infrastructure, including our energy systems; and

3 WHEREAS, The 2025-2026 winter season challenged Rhode Island with unseasonably
4 low temperatures, strong winds, and record levels of snowfall; and

5 WHEREAS, In January 2026, Winter Storm Fern impacted more than half of the U.S. –
6 including Rhode Island – with severe weather that led to more than one million power outages
7 nationwide; and

8 WHEREAS, The regional grid operator, ISO-New England, acknowledged on February
9 3rd that “New England’s power system experienced its most challenging operating conditions
10 since the winter of 2017/2018,” adding that “Prolonged cold temperatures drove consumer
11 demand for electricity sharply upward, both at peak moments and in overall usage, placing
12 sustained pressure on the power system”; and

13 WHEREAS, Throughout that extreme cold and at other relevant times this winter, Rhode
14 Island Energy’s union and non-union natural gas workers kept the system running and gas
15 flowing to homes and businesses across the State; and

16 WHEREAS, On February 22, 2026, a State of Emergency was declared in Rhode Island
17 and other New England states in advance of Winter Storm Hernando, which ultimately shattered
18 previous snowfall records; and

19 WHEREAS, Winter Storm Hernando brought heavy snow accumulations of more than

1 three feet, blizzard conditions for 10 hours, and wind gusts over 70 mph, knocking down trees,
2 damaging power lines, and causing substantial damage to the grid, including 50,000 power
3 outages in Rhode Island; and

4 WHEREAS, Traveling conditions, blocked roads, road closures, snow drifts, and massive
5 snow accumulations created challenging conditions for restoration; and

6 WHEREAS, Thanks to Rhode Island Energy’s commitment to safe and reliable energy
7 systems and the dedication and perseverance of its more than 1,300 union and nonunion
8 employees, the Ocean State was prepared to respond to widespread damage and power outages;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Throughout Winter Storm Hernando, Rhode Island Energy deployed
11 hundreds of crews across the state to assess damage, clean up debris, and restore power amid
12 some of the most severe winter weather Rhode Island has ever experienced; and

13 WHEREAS, Rhode Island Energy restored power to more than 99% of the over 50,000
14 customers impacted in under 48 hours following historic blizzard conditions; and

15 WHEREAS, Prudent investments in critical energy infrastructure are essential to
16 hardening local energy systems against extreme weather events and the effects of climate change;
17 now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby
19 recognizes and commends Rhode Island Energy and its workforce, including essential utility
20 personnel, for their efforts to restore power and helping to keep Rhode Islanders safe during
21 Winter Storm Hernando and other extreme weather events; and be it further

22 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
23 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Greg Cornett, President of Rhode Island
24 Energy.

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