

2025 -- H 5579

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

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A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Introduced By: Representatives Paplauskas, Chippendale, Santucci, Newberry, Nardone,
Place, J. Brien, Baginski, Lima, and Fascia

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 39-1 of the General Laws entitled "Public Utilities Commission" is
2 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **39-1-33.1. Report on electrification.**

4 The public utilities commission shall produce a report by January 1, 2026 and each January
5 1 thereafter, containing an analysis of the electric grid and its ability and/or capacity to handle the
6 electrification load needed to power cars, buildings, and heating of homes within the state. Said
7 report shall be provided to the speaker of the house, the senate president, and the governor.

8 SECTION 2. Section 39-1-37.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 39-1 entitled "Public
9 Utilities Commission" is hereby amended to read as follows:

10 **39-1-37.1. Ratepayers advisory board.**

11 (a) There is hereby established the ratepayers advisory board. The advisory board shall
12 consist of the following public members:

13 (1) Four (4) members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one of
14 whom shall represent the interests of residential ratepayers; one of whom shall represent the
15 interests of the elderly and disabled; one of whom shall represent a community-based consumer
16 organization representing low-income individuals; and one of whom shall represent a LIHEAP
17 consumer.

18 (2) Four (4) members appointed by the senate president, one of whom shall represent the
19 interests of residential ratepayers; one of whom shall represent a chamber of commerce; one of

1 whom shall represent a nonprofit energy consortium of businesses; and one of whom shall represent
2 a community action agency LIHEAP program provider.

3 (3) Three (3) members appointed by the governor, one of whom shall represent the
4 LIHEAP program administration; one of whom shall represent the interests of small business
5 owners; and one of whom shall ~~represent the interests of residents of affordable housing~~ be the
6 commissioner or the acting commissioner of the office of energy resources.

7 (b) The appointments to the advisory board shall be made as follows: each appointing
8 authority shall appoint one member to serve a term of one year, one member to serve a term of two
9 (2) years, and one member to serve a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, each member appointed
10 to the advisory board shall serve a three-year (3) term. The board members are eligible to succeed
11 themselves. A vacancy, other than by expiration of a term, shall be filled in the manner of the
12 original appointment, but only for the unexpired portion of the term.

13 (c) Five (5) members shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of the board shall be
14 required for all recommendations, advice, and approvals of the board, in accordance with this
15 section.

16 (d) A board member shall not receive compensation for his or her service on the board but
17 may receive reimbursement for travel and other necessary expenses, while engaged in the
18 performance of official duties of the board.

19 (e) The ~~board shall elect annually a chairperson and vice chairperson from among its~~
20 ~~membership~~ chairperson of the board shall be the commissioner or acting commissioner of the
21 office of energy resources.

22 (f) The board shall receive staff and administrative support from the division, to organize
23 meetings and take and distribute minutes. The division shall also furnish the advisory board a
24 suitable location to hold its meetings.

25 (g) The board shall meet at least ~~quarterly~~ monthly and at the call of the chairperson or four
26 (4) board members. The administrator shall be present for all board meetings to inform the board
27 of the actions of the division and to respond to the board's inquiries.

28 (h) The board shall review legislative proposals and comment on existing state laws
29 relating to residential ratepayers.

30 (i) The board shall advise the administrator on matters concerning residential ratepayers
31 including, but not limited to utility shutoff policies, rate affordability, conservation measures,
32 consumer education, smart meters and/or restricted use meters, customer service charges,
33 legislation pending before the general assembly, and legislative initiatives.

34 (j) The advisory board shall issue an annual report of findings, including recommendations

1 on current or proposed state programs, policies, regulations, and laws, to the governor and the
2 general assembly.

3 (k) The board shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 2 of title 38, access to public
4 records act, and chapter 46 of title 42, open meetings act.

5 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 This act would require the public utilities commission to produce a report each January
2 containing an analysis of the electric grid and its ability to supply the electricity needs to power
3 cars, buildings and heat homes within the state. This act would also change the requirement of
4 quarterly meetings of the ratepayers advisory board to monthly meetings. The chairperson of the
5 board would be the commissioner or acting commissioner of the office of energy resources.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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