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November 18, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND HAND DELIVERY

Stephanie De La Rosa, Commission Clerk
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888

RE: Docket No. 25-08-GE – PUC’s Inquiry Into Rhode Island Energy’s Billing Systems Practices and Performance
Motion for Protective Treatment of Final Report

Dear Ms. De La Rosa:

On behalf of Rhode Island Energy,¹ I am enclosing the Company’s Motion for Protective Treatment of Confidential Information in accordance with 810-RICR-00-00-1-1.3(H)(3) (Rule 1.3(H)) of the Public Utilities Commission’s (“PUC”) Rules of Practice and Procedure and R.I. Gen. Laws §§38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b), 38-2-2(4)(B) and 38-2-2(4)(F). Rhode Island Energy seeks protection from public disclosure of the Company’s commercially and financially sensitive information, sensitive technological information, and/or customer-specific information that is contained in the Final Report that the consulting firms of Guidehouse Inc., and Van Reen Accounting LLC (together, the “Evaluation Team”) submitted to the PUC on November 14, 2025, pursuant to the PUC’s ruling at an Open Meeting on September 4, 2025, in the above-referenced proceeding. As described in the enclosed Motion, the Company provided confidential and privileged information and data to the Evaluation Team to assist them with their analysis of the Company’s billing system, the product of which is set forth in the Final Report filed with the PUC.

At the Company’s request, the Evaluation Team submitted unredacted and redacted copies of the Final Report in compliance with Rule 1.3(H). To the extent there is any dispute over the proposed redactions, the Company requests that the PUC post the Final Report with all proposed redactions, pending an opportunity for the Company to be heard on its Motion.²

¹ The Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a Rhode Island Energy (“Rhode Island Energy” or the “Company”).

² The PUC, through its Staff Designee, advised that it would publish the Final Report no later than November 21, 2025.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at 401-316-7429.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Brooks Hutchinson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Brooks Hutchinson

Enclosure

evaluation, and audit of Rhode Island Energy’s billing system and related processes.”² The PUC required that the consulting firm be supervised by a member of the PUC’s staff as the “Staff Designee” and provide a final written report to the PUC with its findings.³ The Company released the Request for Proposals (“RFP”) on June 11, 2025, and, following an approximate two month process, on August 28, 2025, the Company recommended the selection of a joint team of experts from the consulting firms of Guidehouse Inc. (“Guidehouse”) and Van Reen Accounting LLC (“Van Reen” and together with Guidehouse are referred to as the “Evaluation Team”).⁴ At an Open Meeting on September 4, 2025, the PUC accepted the Company’s recommended vendor and approved a November 14, 2025, report deadline.

On November 14, 2025, the Evaluation Team filed their Final Report with the PUC’s Staff Designee, setting forth their analysis of the Company’s billing system, which identified key issues, root causes, and areas for improvement. During the Evaluation Team’s analysis, Company representatives cooperated fully with the Evaluation Team, which included providing access to the Company’s systems via Company-issued laptops and providing information and data to the Evaluation Team that is reflected in the Final Report and the associated appendices. Specifically, Appendix C, Appendix D, Appendix E, and Appendix F to the Final Report (together the “Confidential Appendices”) contain the Company’s commercially and financially sensitive information, sensitive technological information, and/or customer-specific information that is confidential to the Company and exempt from public disclosure.

² Statement of the Public Utilities Commission Regarding Rhode Island Energy Billing Issues, Docket No. 25-08-GE (May 15, 2025).

³ Report and Order No. 25352 at 14 (May 16, 2025).

⁴ Rhode Island Energy’s Updated RFP Summary and New Recommendation, Docket No. 25-08-GE (August 28, 2025).

Accordingly, the Company is filing this Motion to request protective treatment of the Confidential Appendices in accordance with 810-RICR-00-00-1.3(H) and R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b), § 38-2-2(4)(B) and § 38-2-2(4)(F). Further, to the extent there is any dispute over the proposed redactions, the Company requests that the PUC post the Final Report with all proposed redactions pending an opportunity for the Company to be heard on this Motion.⁵

II. LEGAL STANDARD

For matters before the PUC, a claim for protective treatment of information is governed by the policy underlying the Access to Public Records Act (“APRA”), R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-1 et seq. See 810-RICR-00-00-1.3(H)(1). The APRA establishes the balance between “public access to public records” and protection “from disclosure [of] information about particular individuals maintained in the files of public bodies when disclosure would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.” R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-1. Under the APRA, any record received or maintained by a state or local governmental agency in connection with the transaction of official business is considered public unless such record falls into one of the exemptions specifically identified by the APRA. See R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 38-2-3(a) and 38-2-2(4). Therefore, if a record provided to the PUC falls within one of the designated exemptions, the PUC is authorized to deem such record confidential and withhold it from public disclosure. The definition of “public record” under the APRA specifically excludes the following:

“[p]ersonnel and other personal individually identifiable records otherwise deemed confidential by federal or state law or regulation, or the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552 et seq. . . .” [§38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b)]

⁵ The PUC, through its Staff Designee, advised that it would publish the Final Report no later than November 21, 2025.

“[t]rade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person, firm, or corporation that is of a privileged or confidential nature.” [§ 38-2-2(4)(B)]

“Scientific and technological secrets and the security plans of military and law enforcement agencies, the disclosure of which would endanger the public welfare and security.” [§ 38-2-2(4)(F)]

The statute provides that such records “shall not be deemed public.” *Id.* The Rhode Island Supreme Court has held that when documents fall within a specific exemption, they “are not considered to be public records,” and “the act does not apply to them.” *Providence Journal Co. v. Kane*, 577 A.2d 661, 663 (R.I. 1990). Further, the court has held that “financial or commercial information” under the APRA includes information “whose disclosure would be likely to either (1) impair the Government’s ability to obtain necessary information in the future, or (2) cause substantial harm to the competitive position of the person from whom the information was obtained.” *Providence Journal Co. v. Convention Ctr. Auth.*, 774 A.2d 40, 47 (R.I. 2001) (internal quotation marks omitted). The first prong of the test is satisfied when information is provided voluntarily to the governmental agency and that information is of a kind that would not customarily be released to the public by the person from whom it was obtained. *Id.* at 47.

In the interest of public disclosure and transparency, the Company is not seeking confidential treatment for the entirety of the Confidential Appendices; rather, the Company has performed a thorough review of the Confidential Appendices and requested that the Evaluation Team redact only those portions deemed necessary to protect the Company’s financial and security interests and its customers’ privacy interests, consistent with the PUC’s prior guidance with respect to confidentiality issues.

III. BASIS FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

A. Appendix C

Appendix C contains the complete architecture diagrams of the Company's meter-to-cash systems, which represent the lifecycle of the customer billing process and the flow of usage information between meter systems. These architecture diagrams are exempt from public disclosure under § 38-2-2(4)(F) because the diagrams constitute technological secrets, which if disclosed could compromise the security of the Company's billing systems and the financial and customer data contained within it. The diagrams identify the names of the databases and applications used in the flow of information between the meter systems to the customer billing system culminating in the bill that is generated to the customer. Appendix C also includes diagram keys that outline each step in the process flow. If disclosed, these diagrams could provide a blueprint for bad actors to breach the Company's databases and systems.

The diagrams also are exempt from public disclosure pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-2(4)(B) as a breach of the Company's systems could compromise sensitive "commercial or financial information . . . that is of a privileged or confidential nature," thereby causing harm to the Company and its customers. For these reasons, the Company has asked that the Evaluation Team redact Appendix C in its entirety.

B. Appendix D

Appendix D identifies key database tables within the meter-to-cash systems. Like the information contained in Appendix C, the names of the database tables contained in the column labeled "Table Name" in Appendix D are exempt from public disclosure as technological secrets under § 38-2-2(4)(F). This column identifies the unique table names and configurations that comprise the Company's CSS billing system, which is proprietary to the Company. This

information together with the description of the tables in the column labeled “Description” could provide bad actors with sufficient information to enable them to breach the Company’s databases potentially compromising commercially and financially sensitive information and/or customer-specific information. The unique table names together with the table descriptions are the equivalent of the narrative roadmap to the diagrams provided in Appendix C. For these reasons, the Company requested that the Evaluation team redact the information contained in the column labeled “Table Name” in Appendix D.

C. Appendix E

Appendix E contains a summary description of known billing issues, some of which if taken together with the number of accounts impacted may allow outside third parties to derive customer specific information and other commercially sensitive information, which is not otherwise in the public domain. Specifically, Appendix E contains a description of certain billing issues that are unique to certain billing rates and/or rate classes, which the Company self-identified to facilitate the Evaluation Team’s analysis, but which has not otherwise been made public. If disclosed, outside third parties may be able to derive the impacted customers from the information contained in Table E-1 or otherwise use such information to cause financial harm to the Company. For these reasons, this information is protected from disclosure under § 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b) and § 38-2-2(4)(B). In addition, there are two instances in which the names of unique tables are referenced, which, like the table names in Appendix D, are deemed technological secrets and exempt from disclosure under § 38-2-2(4)(F). For these reasons, the Company requested that the Evaluation team make limited redactions to Appendix E.

D. Appendix F

Appendix F contains embedded text boxes which include snapshots of customer bills that the Evaluation Team used as error examples from bill testing. These sample bills contain customer-specific information (*e.g.*, customer names, addresses, account and/or meter numbers, and related billing information), which constitute “other personal individually identifiable information . . . the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy” and which are exempt from public disclosure pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b). The sample bills in Appendix F identify the respective account numbers and/or meter numbers, together with names and addresses attributable to those customers. Although the meter numbers in isolation ordinarily would not be considered confidential, taken together with other customer-specific billing information, they would enable an outside third party to use that information in such a way that they could identify an individual customer.

Customer account and related billing information is sensitive financial information and the type of information that has historically been maintained as confidential when provided in PUC filings. The Company has provided this customer-specific information to the Evaluation Team voluntarily to facilitate their analysis and to fulfill the Company’s regulatory responsibilities in this docket. The Company customarily would not release this type of customer-specific information to the public. Public disclosure of the confidential customer account and related billing information would impede the confidentiality and privacy rights of those customers. Therefore, this information satisfies the exceptions found in R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 38-2-2(4)(A)(I)(b) and 38-2-2(4)(B). For these reasons, the Company requested that the Evaluation team make limited redactions to Appendix F.

Accordingly, Rhode Island Energy respectfully requests that the PUC grant protective treatment to the Confidential Appendices and take the following actions to preserve its confidentiality: (1) maintain the identified portions of the Confidential Appendices as confidential indefinitely; (2) not place an un-redacted version of the Confidential Appendices in the public docket; and (3) disclose the un-redacted version of the Confidential Appendices only to the PUC its attorneys, staff, including the Staff Designee, and the Division's liaison in this proceeding, as necessary to review this docket.

IV. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the Company respectfully requests that the PUC grant this motion for protective treatment of the Confidential Appendices.

Respectfully submitted,

**The Narragansett Electric Company
d/b/a Rhode Island Energy**

By its attorney,



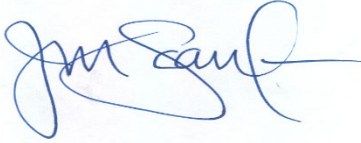
Jennifer Brooks Hutchinson (#6176)
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Dated: November 18, 2025

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that a copy of the cover letter and any materials accompanying this certificate was electronically transmitted to the individuals listed below.

The paper copies of this filing are being hand delivered to the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission and to the Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers.



Joanne M. Scanlon

November 18, 2025
Date

Docket No. 25-08-GE – PUC’s Inquiry Into Rhode Island Energy’s Billing Systems Practices and Performance
Service list updated on 11/17/2025

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