



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
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June 24, 2021

Via Electronic Mail

Luly E. Massaro, Commission Clerk
Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
89 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, RI 02888
Luly.Massaro@puc.ri.gov

Re: PUC Docket No. 5151 - Revolution Wind Advisory Opinion

Dear Ms. Massaro:

Enclosed for filing in this matter is the Pre-Filed Direct Testimony of Commissioner Nicholas S. Ucci of the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources. Copies have been served on the service list via electronic mail.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact me should you have any questions regarding this filing.

Sincerely,

Albert J. Vitali III, Esq.
Senior Legal Counsel

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: REVOLUTION WIND ADVISORY)
OPINION TO THE RHODE ISLAND)
ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD)

DOCKET NO. 5151

PRE-FILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF
COMMISSIONER NICHOLAS S. UCCI

RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF ENERGY RESOURCES



JUNE 24, 2021

Pre-Filed Direct Testimony of Commissioner Nicholas S. Ucci – Office of Energy Resources

1 I, Nicholas S. Ucci, hereby testify under oath as follows:
2

3 **1. Please state your full name, employer, and business address.**

4 My name is Nicholas S. Ucci. I serve as the Commissioner of Energy for the Rhode Island
5 Office of Energy Resources (OER). OER's business address is One Capitol Hill,
6 Providence, Rhode Island 02908.
7

8 **2. What are your responsibilities in your role as Commissioner of OER?**

9 As Commissioner, I oversee all administrative, policy, and programmatic responsibilities
10 of the Office of Energy Resources. OER's mission is to lead the state toward a clean,
11 affordable, reliable, and equitable energy future. OER develops policies and programs that
12 respond to the state's evolving energy needs, while advancing environmental sustainability,
13 energy security, and a vibrant clean energy economy. The agency works closely with
14 public- and private-sector stakeholders, as well as policymakers, to ensure that all Rhode
15 Islanders have access to cost-effective, resilient, and sustainable energy solutions.
16

17 **3. Please describe your educational and professional background.**

18 I hold a Masters Degree in Political Science and Graduate Certificate in Labor Relations
19 from the University of Rhode Island. I also hold Bachelor Degrees, with Highest
20 Distinction, in Economics and Political Science from the University of Rhode Island. I am
21 now in my twentieth year of service for the State of Rhode Island, the last twelve and a
22 half years of which have been in the energy field. Prior to joining OER in December 2013,
23 I served as Principal Policy Associate and Coordinator of the Energy Facility Siting Board
24 at the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission.
25

26 Presently, I serve on the Board of Managers for the New England States Committee on
27 Electricity (NESCOE); on the Board of Directors of the Regional Greenhouse Gas
28 Initiative (RGGI); as Executive Director of the Rhode Island Energy Efficiency &
29 Resource Management Council (EERMC) and Distributed Generation (DG) Board; and as
30 Vice Chairman of the state's Executive Climate Change Council (EC4).
31

1 During my time at OER, Rhode Island has expanded its clean energy portfolio more than
2 ten-fold and remained a national leader in energy efficiency innovation. OER has also led
3 a number of statewide clean energy initiatives, including analysis of pathways for Rhode
4 Island to become the first state in the nation to meet one-hundred percent of its electricity
5 demand with renewables by 2030. I have also led OER’s participation in utility-scale
6 renewable energy procurements conducted by the electric distribution utility, including the
7 competitive request for proposals (“RFP”) that led to the selection of the 400 MW
8 Revolution Wind offshore wind project.

9
10 **4. Have you previously testified before the PUC, the EFSB, or any other regulatory**
11 **bodies?**

12 Yes, including in PUC Docket 4929, the Commission’s review of the power purchase
13 agreement between National Grid and DWW Rev I, LLC for the Revolution Wind project.

14
15 **5. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

16 Pursuant to EFSB Order 149, issued on April 26, 2021, OER – along with the Division of
17 Public Utilities & Carriers and the Department of Administration’s Division of Planning –
18 is required to participate in PUC proceedings concerning the rendering of an Advisory
19 Opinion on: (i) the need for the proposed Facilities; and (ii) whether the Facilities are
20 expected to transmit energy from the offshore generating source of the Revolution Wind
21 Project to the mainland at the lowest reasonable cost to the consumer consistent with the
22 objective of ensuring that the construction and operation of the proposed Facilities will be
23 accomplished in compliance with all of the requirements of the laws, rules, and
24 regulations.¹

25
26 **6. Does OER have an opinion on these matters?**

27 Yes. The transmission and interconnection facilities proposed in Revolution Wind LLC’s
28 December 30, 2020 application are necessary to enable delivery of zero-emission
29 electricity and associated market products, including environmental attributes, from certain
30 offshore wind generating units to the mainland grid. Construction of these facilities will

¹ EFSB Order 149, 14.

1 ultimately result in an increase of carbon-free energy flowing onto the New England grid.
2 This outcome is wholly consistent with Rhode Island’s climate change and greenhouse gas
3 emissions mitigation goals, including, but not limited to, the mandates contained within
4 the recently-enacted Act on Climate.

5
6 A substantial portion (400 MW) of the energy and environmental attributes that will be
7 generated by Revolution Wind, when operational, will serve Rhode Island ratepayers and
8 are already subject to a PUC-approved power purchase agreement (PPA).² The successful
9 permitting and construction of the proposed transmission and interconnection facilities are
10 crucial if local ratepayers are to realize the full suite of energy, economic, and
11 environmental benefits flowing from that agreement.

12
13 To OER’s knowledge, Rhode Island ratepayers will not be charged any new costs for the
14 construction of the proposed transmission and interconnection facilities absent those which
15 may already be embedded in the PUC-approved PPA for Revolution Wind. Therefore,
16 OER holds that the Facilities are cost-justified, as the costs of developing the project are
17 borne by Revolution Wind.

18
19 **7. Do the proposed facilities help advance the state’s energy policy goals?**

20 Yes. The proposed Facilities will advance several key energy-related policy goals
21 including, but not limited to:

- 22
23 • Enhancing energy security by enabling the interconnection of a newly-developed,
24 carbon-free generation resource at scale and increasing resource adequacy and
25 resiliency through energy supply diversification, consistent with the state’s Energy
26 Plan, *Energy 2035*;

27

² On June 7, 2019, the PUC approved – in Docket No. 4929, Order No. 23609 – a power purchase agreement between the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid and DWW Rev I, LLC for approximately 400 MW of newly-developed offshore wind energy.

- 1 • Expanding the state’s clean energy economy, including local investment and jobs in
2 Southern New England’s burgeoning offshore wind industry; and
3
4 • Enabling further electric sector decarbonization consistent with the Act on Climate and
5 the Resilient Rhode Island Act.
6

7 The EFSB has directed the Statewide Planning Program, working in coordination with
8 OER, to render an advisory opinion as to (i) the socio-economic impact of the proposed
9 Facilities, including its construction and operation; (ii) the proposed Facilities' consistency
10 and compliance with the State Guide Plan including the State Energy Plan-Energy 2035;
11 and (iii) a particular examination of the proposed Facilities' consistency and compliance
12 with the State Energy Plan and whether the Facility will conform to the Resilient Rhode
13 Island Act and other relevant statutes.³ This advisory opinion is forthcoming.
14

15 **8. Does this conclude your testimony?**

16 Yes.

³ EFSB Order 149, 15.