

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD**

**RE: SB 2015-06, INVENERGY THERMAL DEVELOPMENT, LLC APPLICATION TO
CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE THE CLEAR RIVER ENERGY CENTER IN
BURRILLVILLE, RHODE ISLAND**

Pre-filed testimony of Michael F. Sabitoni

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2 The proposed Clear River Energy Center is one of if not the largest construction project in the
3 history of the State of Rhode Island. According to numerous experts, this project will create
4 more than 320 full-time annual construction trade jobs per year from 2018-2021. In total, this
5 project will create more than 1,200 annual jobs for the members of the RIBCTC. These jobs will
6 pay at least \$60,000 in wages and another \$30,000 in health and retirement benefits annually. If
7 approved, will be constructed under an all-union Project Labor Agreement (“PLA”). Therefore,
8 any and all project construction craft hires will be hired through the Rhode Island Building and
9 Construction Trades Council (“RIBCTC”) individual union halls. Michael F. Sabitoni, President
10 of the RIBCTC, will attest to the enormous socio-economic impact this project will have on its
11 members.

12 I. INTRODUCTION

13 Q. Please state your name, position and business address.

14 My name is Michael F. Sabitoni. I am President of the RIBCTC. My business address is 410
15 South Main Street, Providence, RI 02903.

16 Q. Would you please summarize your professional background and experience?

17 I am a third-generation Laborer. I began my career with the Laborers’ International Union of
18 North America (LIUNA) when I joined Providence, Rhode Island’s Laborers’ Local Union 271

1 in 1988. Soon after joining the ranks of the local, I worked my way up to become a general
2 foreman and steward while attending the Community College of Rhode Island and Bryant
3 University at night. In 2000, I became a Construction Marketing Representative for the LIUNA
4 National LECET Fund where I tracked construction projects in the Northeast and solicited union
5 contractors to bid on new projects. In 2003, I was appointed Field Representative for Local
6 Union 271. In 2005, I was appointed to the position of Business Manager of that Local and was
7 subsequently elected to that position in 2007. In 2007, I was elected President of the RIBCTC.
8 My summary biography is appended as Exhibit 1 to my testimony.

9 **Q. Would you please describe the organization, membership and purpose of the entity**
10 **on whose behalf you are providing testimony?**

11 The RIBCTC is a voluntary federation of seventeen (17) local trade unions dedicated to
12 improving the lives of working men and women in the construction industry by assisting them in
13 finding good quality jobs that provide fairness and dignity in the workplace and securing social
14 equity. The members of the council have been involved in every major construction initiative—
15 private or public—undertaken in and around the State of Rhode Island in the last seventy (70)
16 years. Cumulatively, the individual unions represent approximately 9,500 workers in and around
17 the Rhode Island area. In addition, RIBCTC member unions have the ability to draw upon a
18 regional workforce in excess of 37,000. RIBCTC member unions include Boilermakers Local
19 No.29, Bricklayers Local No. 3, Carpenters Local No. 94, Elevator Constructors Local No. 39,
20 Glaziers Local No. 1333, Heat & Frost Insulators Local No. 6, IBEW Local No.99, Iron Workers
21 Local No. 37, Laborers' Local 271, Millwrights Local No. 1121, Painters Local No. 195,
22 Plasterers & Cement Masons No. 40, Plumbers & Pipefitters Local No. 51, Roofers &
23 Waterproofers Local No. 33, Sheet metal Workers Local No. 17, Sprinkler Fitters Local No. 676,

1 and Teamsters Local No. 251. RIBCTC'S principal office is located at 410 South Main Street,
2 Providence, RI 02903.

3 **II. POSITION OF ORGANIZATION**

4 **Q. What is the position of your organization with respect to these proceedings?**

5 The RIBCTC has been granted Intervenor status in this proceeding.

6 **Q. Why did your organization Intervene in these proceedings?**

7 If approved, this project will be constructed by hundreds of uniquely qualified skilled craftsmen
8 and women from the seventeen (17) unions of the RIBCTC. Most of these workers will be from
9 the local area. Moreover, the workers that work on this project will be deriving one-hundred
10 percent (100%) of their household income from working on this facility. Accordingly, no group
11 of Rhode Island residents has a stronger economic and/or socio-economic interest in the outcome
12 of this application to construct the Clear River Energy Center in Burrillville, Rhode Island.

13 **III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT**

14 **Q. How many jobs will be created by the project?**

15 Based on my research, this is the largest construction project in the history of the State of Rhode
16 Island. According to numerous experts, this project will create more than 320 full-time annual
17 construction trade jobs per year from 2018-2021. By construction industry standards, being in
18 one (1) location for more than two (2) years is a unique luxury that does not occur often.
19 Accordingly, these types of jobs are very desirable. In total, this project will create more than
20 1,200 annual jobs for the members of the RIBCTC.

21 **Q. How would approval of this project affect your members?**

22 This project will be constructed under an all-union RIBCTC PLA with union scale wages and
23 benefits. The PLA will require that the owner and contractor to contact our union halls for any
24 and all hires for this project. Accordingly, approval of this project will create hundreds of well-

1 paying construction jobs for the members of the RIBCTC for an extended period. Each one of
2 these jobs will pay at least \$60,000 in wages and another \$30,000 in health and retirement
3 benefits. These jobs will not only be well-paying, by construction industry standards, they will
4 also last for an unusually long time.

5 **Q. Do you have the capacity to provide skilled labor to this project?**

6 Yes. Our hiring hall referral system provides us with the infrastructure needed to place the
7 needed local skilled tradesmen and women on this project. Additionally, this, and every PLA we
8 have signed in the past ten (10) years has a requirement that the general contractor utilize
9 apprentices trained through Building Futures, a local non-profit corporation formed in a down
10 economy that is dedicated to recruiting, training, and placing disadvantaged *local* low-income
11 adults in area construction trade apprentice programs. This long-term planning has allowed the
12 RIBCTC to be ready to meet the future skilled workforce needs of the marketplace and projects
13 like the proposed Clear River Energy Center.

14 **Q. How would approval of this project provide a socio-economic benefit to this state?**

15 Based on preliminary estimates of the size of this project as well as the marketplace at large, this
16 project will probably account for 15-20% of the entire commercial construction market in the
17 State of Rhode Island for two plus years. This will substantially increase the employment
18 prospects and actual income for all our local union members. This will enhance the economic
19 and social progress of not only the workers employed on this project and their families, but any
20 other aspects of the economy that these workers and their families happen to touch and/or
21 participate in. Lastly, the substantial income tax these well-paying jobs generate will provide the
22 State with significant additional income that will allow it to distribute these funds as it sees fit to
23 further enhance the socio-economic progress of all the citizens of our State. Accordingly, a

1 project of this size and duration will have a substantial positive socio-economic impact on the
2 construction industry as well as an impact on our entire State.

3 **IV. CONCLUSION**

4 **Q. Do you have anything further to add?**

5 This proposed project would benefit this State and its workforce enormously. It would provide
6 enormous work opportunities for local skilled tradesmen and women for an extended period of
7 time; significant new tax revenue to the State via a substantial increase in income tax receipts,
8 and to the Town of Burrillville through the parties' tax stabilization agreement; it would
9 stabilize, if not lower, local energy costs thereby making local businesses more competitive in
10 the marketplace; and, if that occurs businesses will expand and there will be additional
11 employment opportunities for the members of the RIBCTC. Accordingly, the RIBCTC urges an
12 expeditious review and approval of this project.

13 **Q. Does this conclude your direct testimony?**

14 Yes, it does.

EXHIBIT 1

MICHAEL F. SABITONI

Michael F. Sabitoni is a second-generation Laborer who began his career with the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) when he joined Providence, Rhode Island's Construction and General Laborers' Local Union 271 in 1988. Soon after joining the ranks of the local, Mr. Sabitoni worked his way up to become a general foreman and steward while attending the Community College of Rhode Island and Bryant University at night.

In 1998, he joined the Laborers' New England Region Organizing Fund working on grassroots organizing campaigns throughout the region. Two years later in 2000, Mr. Sabitoni became a Construction Marketing Representative for the LIUNA National LECET Fund where he tracked construction projects in the Northeast and solicited union contractors to bid on new projects.

In 2003, Mr. Sabitoni's leadership skills and knowledge of the construction industry was recognized by Local Union 271's Executive Board and he was appointed as Field Representative for Local Union 271. In 2005 Mr. Sabitoni was unanimously appointed by Local Union 271's Executive Board to the position of Business Manager and was subsequently elected to that position in 2007. Under Mr. Sabitoni's leadership, Local Union 271's membership continues to expand and its market share numbers in the construction industry which are among the highest in the nation.

In 2007, Mr. Sabitoni's tireless leadership and commitment to working families was recognized by his fellow union leaders throughout the state when he was elected President of the Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades Council, a position which he currently holds. Mr. Sabitoni also holds the position of Chairman of the Rhode Island Laborers' Pension Fund, the Rhode Island Laborers' Health and Welfare Fund and the Rhode Island Laborers' Annuity Fund. Along with those positions, he also serves as a Trustee on the New England Laborers' Training Trust Fund, the New England Laborers' Labor-Management Cooperation Trust and the New England Laborers' Health and Safety Fund.

In July 2012, Mr. Sabitoni's leadership was again recognized as he was unanimously appointed as the Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer of the Rhode Island Laborers' District Council representing over 10,000 members, in both the public and private sector.

Mr. Sabitoni and his wife Joyce currently reside in Johnston, Rhode Island with their three (3) children Michael, Matthew and Cameron.