

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

IN RE: THE OFFICE OF ENERGY RESOURCES :
BUDGET REQUESTS TO PERFORM CEILING : **DOCKET NO. 4604**
PRICE SERVICES OR STUDIES FOR THE :
RENEWABLE ENERGY GROWTH PROGRAM :

ORDER

On January 4, 2022, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) filed a request with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for funding in an amount not to exceed \$159,940 to hire a consultant to conduct quality assurance inspections of enrolled installations and issue a report on the 2022 Renewable Energy Growth (RE Growth) Program. The request is \$13,540 more than that requested in 2020, the most recent funding request.¹ OER explained that the additional costs anticipated for the 2022 quality assurance work are the result of increased labor costs, COVID-related costs, new work proposed including inspections of small scale and energy storage projects, and a training course for installers.² OER stated that the quality assurance work should continue, in part, because of upcoming changes to the National Electric Code that will apply to these projects.³

After a review of the filing and OER's responses to the PUC's data requests, on March 29, 2022 at an Open Meeting, the PUC approved OER's request finding that it met the requirements of R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-26.6-4(b); was the result of a competitive bid process; was supported by a detailed budget; and was consistent with similar work done in prior years.

¹¹ While this is typically an annual request for funding, due to the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions, no quality assurance work was conducted in 2020. Therefore, the 2020 funding was used in 2021. OER Funding Request Letter at 1. <http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4604-DGBoard-BudgetRequest%201-4-2022.pdf>.

² OER Funding request at 5.

³ *Id.*

On April 27, 2022, OER, in collaboration with the Distributed Generation Board (DG Board), made a separate request for funding not to exceed \$77,557 to retain the services of a consultant pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §39-26.6-4(b).⁴ Based on a memorandum provided by the consultant, Sustainable Energy Advantage (SEA) would be retained to perform the ceiling price studies for the 2023 RE Growth Program Year and to participate in the 2023 RE Growth Program proceedings before the PUC.⁵ This request included \$65,000 to complete the contracted scope of work, namely developing ceiling prices for each of the classes of renewable energy technologies in the proposed 2023 RE Growth Program, as well as an additional \$12,557 for the development of rebuttal testimony and related data requests, if necessary.⁶

On June 10, 2022, the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, filed through legal counsel, a recommendation to approve the request as reasonable. Specifically, the Division supported the inclusion of the \$12,557 to cover the cost of developing rebuttal testimony or responding to discovery based on the fact that over the past two years, such activities have been necessary during the PUC's review of the Renewable Energy Growth Program classes, targets, and ceiling prices.⁷

At an Open Meeting on June 21, 2022, the PUC reviewed the record and approved the budget request, finding it to be consistent with R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-26.6-4(b) and to be reasonable. Any funds not spent will be available to the following year's funding request.

Accordingly, it is hereby

(24455) ORDERED:

⁴ OER Funding Request (Apr. 27, 2022); <https://ripuc.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur841/files/2022-06/4604-DGBoard-BudgetRequest%204-27-22.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.* at 1-2.

⁷ Div. Letter at 1 (June 10, 2022); <https://ripuc.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur841/files/2022-06/4604-DIV-Memo%206-10-22.pdf>.

1. The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources' request for funding to contract with a vendor to perform a study of renewable energy installation quality and issue a report in an amount not to exceed \$159,940 is approved.
2. The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources' request for funding to retain the services of a consultant to develop ceiling prices for the 2023 Renewable Energy Growth Program and otherwise participate in PUC proceedings related to the Renewable Energy Growth Program in an amount not to exceed \$77,557 is approved.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND, PURSUANT TO OPEN MEETING DECISIONS ON MARCH 29, 2022 AND JUNE 21, 2022. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED JULY 27, 2022.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Chairman



Abigail Anthony, Commissioner



John C. Revens, Jr., Commissioner

NOTICE OF RIGHT OF APPEAL: Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-5-1, any person aggrieved by a decision or order of the PUC may, within seven days from the date of the order, petition the Rhode Island Supreme Court for a Writ of Certiorari to review the legality and reasonableness of the decision or order.