



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Douglas W. Gablinske
Rhode Islanders for Affordable Energy
Executive Director, The Energy Council of RI
(401) 741-5101
doug@tecri.org

**New Coalition – Rhode Islanders for Affordable Energy –
Advocating for Tackling State’s High Energy Costs Head-On**

Building Clear River Energy Center Would Save Ratepayers Millions

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – June 8, 2017 – Rhode Islanders for Affordable Energy today announced the formation of its coalition of homeowners, large and small business owners, tradesmen and women, and the state’s major energy users, who together are advocating for new sources of affordable, reliable energy for the state’s ratepayers.

Rhode Island faces an energy crisis. Ratepayers here pay the 2nd highest electric costs in the contiguous U.S. – more than 60 percent higher than the national average (U.S. Energy Information Administration, March 2017). At the same time, our energy outlook is uncertain: Nearly one-third of New England’s energy portfolio is expected to retire in the next decade, and we don’t now have enough new power sources lined up to fill the gap, according to the region’s grid operator ISO-New England. We all want more renewable energy, but the region is decades away from installing enough renewable resources to allow for complete independence from fossil fuels.

Rhode Islanders for Affordable Energy believe that the Ocean State’s economy can not fully rebound until we finally address how we’ll keep the lights on, in an affordable way.

The coalition, whose members represent hundreds of individuals and local businesses, is launching an informational campaign to educate Rhode Islanders about the issue of high energy costs and to advocate that state regulators approve the proposed Clear River Energy Center in Burrillville as the first step to tackling this longstanding problem.

The Clear River project is estimated to save Rhode Island ratepayers millions of dollars in electricity costs in just the first four years of operations. Bringing Clear River online will also balance against intermittent renewable energy in the state’s

system and mean that older, dirtier, more expensive plants in the region can finally be shut down.

“Rhode Island homeowners and businesses large and small all face the heavy burden of sky-high, and often unpredictable, electricity costs,” said coalition member Douglas Gablinske, executive director of the Energy Council of Rhode Island (TEC-RI), which represents the state’s largest energy users.

“These runaway energy costs are a major detriment to the ongoing recovery of our state’s economy, and it’s time for Rhode Island to finally tackle this issue,” Gablinske said. “As a coalition, we believe that building the new Burrillville power plant is the first step to bringing reliable, affordable energy to the state and providing much-needed relief to ratepayers.”

The coalition’s initial membership includes the Energy Council of Rhode Island (TEC-RI), Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades, the Rhode Island Business Coalition, the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association and the Small Business Association of New England.

For more information, visit the coalition’s website at RIAffordableEnergy.com.

###