



# SOLAR POWER



# FOREST PRESERVATION

## WORKING HAND-IN-HAND.

**Everyone agrees:** We need to stop cutting forests for solar, and start putting it on rooftops, parking lots, and closed landfills. H5853 (Speakman) and S684 (DiMario) are commonsense solar siting reform that preserves Rhode Island’s forests.

### RI CAN PROTECT FORESTS & RAPIDLY EXPAND SOLAR

Currently, Rhode Island is not on a path to achieve either forest conservation goals or renewable energy deployment goals. The existing programs that incentivize solar development are flawed—they have historically benefitted the lowest price options, which has unintentionally led to large-scale clear cutting of critical forestland, which was the second largest cause of clear cutting in Rhode Island as of 2022. To preserve forests, municipalities across the state are pushing back and passing ordinances prohibiting solar development, which is not the solution either.

Instead, we need reform that allows solar development and forest preservation to work hand-in-hand. HB5853 and S684 will thoughtfully reform solar siting laws to ensure forests are preserved yet still pave the way for increased solar deployment—two items that are needed in a holistic approach to tackling climate change in the Ocean State.

### HOUSE BILL 5853 AND SENATE BILL 684 WILL PROTECT OUR FORESTS & MEET RHODE ISLAND’S ENERGY DEPLOYMENT GOALS. HERE’S HOW:

- 1 CONSERVING CORE FORESTS:** Shift state-level incentives for Virtual Net Metering credits or Renewable Energy Growth tariff payments outside of core forests (unfragmented forest blocks of single or multiple parcels 250 acres or greater), while providing a safe harbor for projects currently in development that have completed or paid for an interconnection study.
- 2 EXPANDING SOLAR DEVELOPMENT:** Expand virtual net metering for the first time in Rhode Island law, but will include an overall cap... expand virtual net metering, but will include an overall cap of 550 megawatts. All new development will be outside of core forests, excluding any preferred sites within core forests (e.g. rooftops, industrial sites, gravel pits), while significantly expanding Renewable Energy Growth up to 300 megawatts per year—one of the most cost effective programs.
- 3 PRESERVING & GROWING GOOD JOBS:** Provide job security as programs transition and state-level incentives drive solar development outside of the core forests.

A wide range of organizations proudly endorse HB5853 and S684 because it is smart solar siting reform that will make a positive impact on Rhode Island’s forests.

