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**Testimony of Jerry Elmer, Esq.,  
On Behalf of Conservation Law Foundation  
In Support of H-7473  
House Committee on the Environment  
Thursday, February 25, 2016**

My name is Jerry Elmer. I am a Senior Attorney for the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF). CLF supports H-7473, and respectfully urges passage of this bill.

H-7473 builds on two highly successful antecedents enacted by the General Assembly. In 2011, the General Assembly enacted – by unanimous vote of both chambers – the “Renewable Energy Standard Contracts” program. The program was designed to – and did – make it easier for small, local renewable energy developers to build small, local renewable energy projects right here in Rhode Island.

That program was so successful that in 2014, the General Assembly expanded the earlier program and re-named it the Renewable Energy Growth Program (REG Program). The REG Program was four times larger than the earlier Standard Contracts Program, and it had a number of highly innovative features designed to facilitate a rapid ramp-up in local development of renewables. For example, the new REG Program shifted payment to developers from contracts to tariffs, and provided enhanced economic incentives for small solar developers.

CLF staff attorneys were deeply honored in 2011 and again in 2014 to have been asked by the General Assembly leadership to help in drafting these two laws. In the intervening years, CLF has participated in all the PUC dockets implementing these renewable energy programs, including Docket # 4316 (addressing contract language in the Standard Contracts Program); Dockets ## 4589-A and 4589-B (setting tariff amounts and non-pecuniary tariff terms under the REG program); and Docket 4568 (addressing rate-design issues pursuant to Section 24 of the REG statute).

It is also noteworthy that legislators, regulators, and others from New York to California and Oregon have been interested in modelling bills and laws in their states on our highly successful Rhode Island model.

H-7473 is an excellent way for the state of Rhode Island to address climate change and to create local jobs in a green economy.

CLF strongly urges passage of this excellent bill. Thank you.