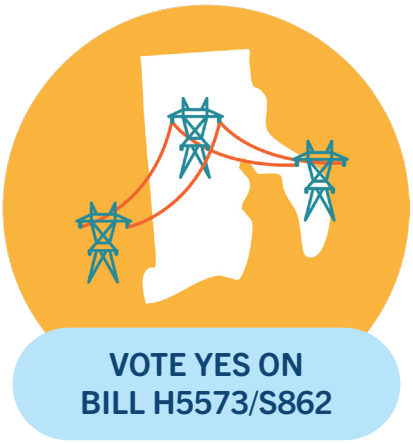
Reduce Rising Energy Costs with Grid Enhancing Technologies (GETs)

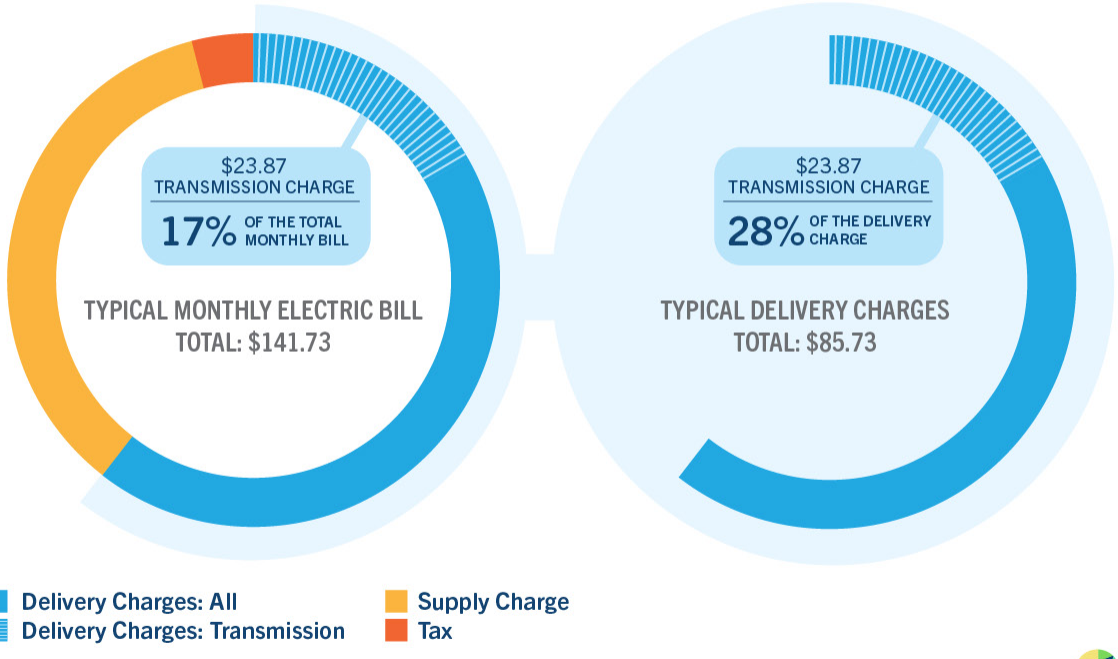


In the 2025 Rhode Island legislative session, Acadia Center has developed legislation that supports the adoption of Grid Enhancing Technologies—also known as GETs—and advanced conductors which carry more power than traditional power lines. The House bill is H5573, introduced by Representative Joseph Solomon, with Senator Robert Britto introducing S862 in the Senate.

Why are energy costs rising?

At the regional level, we are not seeing meaningful scrutiny or prudency on billions of dollars of investments. The transmission system (high voltage lines that transport electricity over long distances from sources of generation to distribution lines) has its investments reviewed and approved by our regional grid operator, ISO-New England, with projects presented as soon as 90 days before the start of construction. NESCOE, the New England States Committee on Electricity, has stated that not a single project has been denied or modified after presentation to the ISO committee, even as costs continue to rise. The amount spent on transmission annually in New England increased from $58 million in 2016 to nearly $800 million in 2023. Despite this dramatic increase in spending, transmission projects continue to receive very little oversight.

Transmission on your electric bill



Source: RI PUC. Notice of Public Hearing on RI Energy rate change, March 2025.

Acadia Center

In light of expectations for electricity demand to increase dramatically in the coming decades due to the electrification of homes and transportation, there is an urgent need to increase the capacity of the regional transmission system without significantly increasing costs. Further, transmission upgrades are needed ASAP in order to interconnect wind and solar generation sources and support the region's clean energy transition.

Analyzing how GETs and other opportunities can enhance the capacity and efficiency of our electric grid at lower cost is a crucial step toward managing inevitable increases in demand and controlling these costs. Bill H5573/S862 leverages siting, planning and incentives at the state level to ensure that Rhode Island ratepayers are not missing out on the benefits of more cost-effective technologies.

What are GETs and why are they needed?

GETs are hardware and software that increase the capacity and efficiency of the electric grid on a faster timeline. These technologies are installed on existing power lines to give operators more situational awareness and control over the grid. GETs can provide operators with real-time information and more control over the transmission as well as distribution system (low voltage lines, typically <69 kV, that transport electricity to end users like households and businesses). This legislation also encourages the use of advanced conductors, which can replace the less efficient materials in power lines without a complete rebuild so more power can pass through the lines.

Why aren't GETs installed already?

Under existing regulation, utilities earn their profit on "capital expenditures," which includes infrastructure projects like substations, poles, and wires. By building a new, expensive power line, for example, utilities can earn more than if they deployed less expensive GETs, which are used to make existing power lines more efficient. **These financial incentives bias utilities towards expensive infrastructure investments that cost ratepayers more.**

How does bill H5572/S862 encourage cost effective grid infrastructure?

- It instructs and empowers the utilities in front of the Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to consider GETs and advanced conductors, for the siting of transmission and planning of distribution infrastructure.
- Expands the EFSB's transmission siting review within the state to include the replacement, rebuild, or expansion of existing infrastructure.
- Allows utilities and the PUC to propose a financial incentive for the deployment of GETs and advanced conductors.
- Prompts the PUC and the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to conduct an investigation on such technologies for transmission and distribution infrastructure within the state.

For more information, contact:

Emily Koo, Senior Policy Advocate and Rhode Island Program Director
ekoo@acadiacenter.org | 401-276-0600 x402