



2017 Emerging Environmental Priorities

Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) and Green Economy Bond Coalition (GEB)

ENERGY

Carbon pricing mechanism to strengthen the economy and reduce pollution

Lead organizations: Emerald Cities, People's Power & Light, USGBC, Clean Water Action

This act would establish a fee on companies that sell fossil fuels in Rhode Island, paid at the point of sale within the state for consumption or distribution within the state. This act would also establish a "Clean Energy and Jobs Fund" to disburse the collected funds. The funds would be disbursed through rebates to all residents and businesses in the state as well as allocated to climate resilience, energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy programs that benefit Rhode Islanders, particularly low income residential properties and small business properties.

GHG Mitigation Project

Lead organization: RICOSH

There should be a GHG assessment on private and public entities including cities and state agencies based on GHG emissions over a specific period thus creating a financial incentive to reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. The GHG Mitigation Bank could provide grants to either private or public facilities such as community action groups or health centers to help these groups reduce their GHG. The GHG Mitigation Bank could also fund broader public projects such as public transit in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Renewable Energy Growth Program Extension

Lead Organizations: Conservation Law Foundation, People's Power & Light

The Distributed Generation Contract program was a successful pilot that was extended into the Renewable Energy Growth program in 2014 (RIGL 39-26.6). This bill extends the REG for an additional 10 years after the 5th program year, with an annual target of 40 nameplate MW for each of the 10 year period. This will help diversify Rhode Island's energy mix and improve system reliability.

LAND/WATER

Amend the Green Buildings Act

Lead organization: U.S. Green Building Council of Rhode Island

The Green Buildings Act Green Act, RIGL Chapter 37-24 provides that "All major facility projects of public agencies be designed and constructed to at least the LEED certified or an equivalent high performance standard". The legislative findings for The Green Buildings Act state that these high performance standards save energy, reduce water consumption, improve indoor air quality, and make the workers and students more productive. Further these high performance standards make our public facilities sustainable, resilient, and mitigate climate change. The proposed amendment to The Green Buildings Act would include sustainable landscapes for sites and properties with and without buildings. The proposed amendment would reduce water demand, filter and reduce storm water runoff, provide wildlife habitat, reduce energy consumption, improve air quality, improve human health, and increase outdoor recreation opportunities for the buildings, properties, the surrounding neighborhoods, and their communities. The high performance standards used for green infrastructure would be LEED for

Neighborhood Development, SITES, and the applicable credits of the LEED rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council.

Defending Protected Lands from Vandalism & Theft

Lead organization: Rhode Island Land Trust Council.

This legislation increases penalties for people who cut trees, steal stone walls or otherwise intentionally vandalize or damaging protected lands. Current penalties are so low that they are not a deterrent. The legislation, patterned after an effective law in Connecticut, increases the fines for people convicted and enables land trusts and municipalities to recoup costs for restoring protected lands that are willfully damaged.

Local Agriculture Seafood Act

Lead Organization: Grow Smart RI

Continue supporting a \$100,000 line item appropriation in the state budget for the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) grants that have proven effective in strengthening Rhode Island's food system, economy and public health.

Fund and implement the recommendations of the Governor's Outdoor Recreation Council.

Lead organization: The Nature Conservancy

Rhode Island has a nationally recognized network of outdoor recreational resources and programming. In 2016, Governor Raimondo convened the Outdoor Recreation Council to develop recommendations for a statewide strategy to promote and improve opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism in Rhode Island. The Council found that Rhode Island has not achieved the potential of the state's recreational resources either to promote the health and quality of life for our residents, or to maximize the economic benefits of tourism. Funding cuts to state and local recreation budgets have led to disrepair or closure of facilities, and many Rhode Islanders lack convenient access to outdoor recreation. The Environment Council of Rhode Island supports the funding and implementation of the Outdoor Recreation Council recommendations.

State Historic Tax Credit

Lead organization: Grow Smart RI

Provide multi-year funding for the State Historic Preservation investment Tax Credit, a proven and effective incentive for repurposing vacant and underutilized historic structures in transit-rich existing centers of development and which often involve brownfield remediation, neighborhood revitalization and an alternative to sprawl.

Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program

Lead organization: Grow Smart RI

Enact a competitive grant program for municipalities similar to MassWorks in Massachusetts that would support smart growth and green infrastructure investments in our already developed urban, town and village centers where public investment can be maximized for public benefit.

WASTE

Exclude the use of flame retardants in household items

Lead organization: Clean Water Action

Flame retardants are example of outdated chemical products that now are understood to be harmful to human health. If passed, this bill would prevent future manufacturing, sale, and distribution of products with the hazardous flame retardant chemicals: TCEP, TCPP, and TDCPP. Children's products, residential furniture, and upholstered bedding are all prohibited from containing those flame retardants. This act expands on the efforts and bill from 2015 [H 5694].

TRANSPORTATION

Create Incentives for Complete Streets

Lead organization: Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition

Rhode Island General Law [§ 24-16-2](#), passed in 2012, stipulates that the State must consider complete streets features when undertaking road projects (e.g. bike lanes, sidewalks). However, this law has no been effective due to its lack of enforcement. Both the Department of Transportation and municipalities require incentives to encourage incorporation of these features in street design projects. This lack of accountability results in many gaps in the state's bike network. Those gaps are the biggest factor limiting our ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increasing bicycling levels.

Grow Mass Transit

Lead Organizations: Grow Smart RI, RICOSH

Prioritize development of a comprehensive vision and transit master plan to develop and optimize transit resources, assets and modes (bus, rail, ferry, bicycle and pedestrian, car-share, bike-share, institutional shuttle services, etc.) in a way that gets more residents and visitors where they need to go when they need to get there with significantly reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT's).

State Employee Transit Pass

Lead Organization: Grow Smart RI

Emulate RIPTA's popular transit pass program for private sector employees (EcoPass) by providing a state employee transit pass program for the state's 14,500 employees (as called for in Rhode Island's State Employee Transportation Guide Plan and related 2008 law).

OTHER DEVELOPING PRIORITIES

Clarify the Role of the Water Resources Board – *ECRI Members*

Creation of a Bikeway System for each RI community - *Blackstone Valley Tourism Council*

EC4 GHG 2016 Report Evaluation and Improvement – *ECRI and GEB Coalition*

Financing Stormwater Infrastructure for Cities and Towns – *Save the Bay*

Green Municipal Aggregation – *People's Power & Light*

Opposition to the Invenergy Power Plant in Burrillville - *Blackstone Valley Tourism Council*

Prohibit Distracted Driving – *Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition*

Require Disclosure of Ingredients in Cosmetic Products – *Clean Water Action*

Strengthen Environmental Enforcement Capacity at DEM and CRMC – *Save The Bay*

Sustainable Tourism Development for Rhode Island – *Blackstone Valley Tourism Council*