



THE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL OF RHODE ISLAND (ECRI)

2019 EARTH DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE

ECRI PRIORITY BILLS – IN FAVOR

H-5789, S-661 – RI ENERGY RESOURCES ACT: SOLAR SITING

In order to meet our greenhouse gas emissions targets and mitigate the worst effects of climate change, Rhode Island will have to turn to renewable energy. However, we must also protect critical ecosystems like forests, farmland, and open space and incentivize solar energy projects to be built on lands that have previously been developed like brownfields, landfills, and rooftops. This bill includes a suite of strategies to incentivize proper siting and minimize the size of commercial solar in environmentally sensitive areas. It also requires the establishment of comprehensive solar energy siting ordinances in each Rhode Island town and city and requires the state to develop a renewable energy siting plan.

House Sponsors: *Rep. Bennett, Rep. Handy, Rep. Edwards, Rep. Diaz, Rep. Slater*

Senate Sponsors: *Sen. Sosnowski, Sen. McCaffrey, Sen. Conley, Sen. Lombardo, Sen. Coyne*

H-5869, S-662 – ECONOMIC AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE ACT OF 2019

This act would establish a fee on companies that sell fossil fuels in Rhode Island, paid at the first point of sale within the state for consumption or distribution within the state. This act would also establish an economic and climate resilience fund to disburse the collected revenues. 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 municipalities, neighborhoods, and residential properties, as well as small business properties. Requires that both Massachusetts and one additional Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative state pass a carbon fee of at least five dollars (\$5) per metric ton of carbon to take effect.

House Sponsors: *Rep. Bennett, Rep. Handy, Rep. Kislak, Rep. Donovan, Rep. Carson*

Senate Sponsors: *Sen. Sosnowski, Sen. McCaffrey, Sen. Conley, Sen. Euer, Sen. Goldin*

H-5444, S-658 – RI GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS ACT

The Rhode Island Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) would require our State to take action on climate change. While Rhode Island now has goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we have no way to enforce those goals and no comprehensive plan to achieve them. Modelled on similar statutes enacted in Massachusetts and Connecticut years ago, the RI GWSA would require reducing carbon emissions economy-wide by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, with interim targets for 2020 and 2035. The RI GWSA addresses the three largest sectors that contribute to carbon pollution: electricity, transportation, and buildings, and gives state government flexibility in implementing strategies to meet the mandatory targets.

House Sponsors: *Rep. Blazewski, Rep. Carson, Rep. Solomon, Rep. Ucci, Rep. Handy*

Senate Sponsors: *Sen. Euer, Sen. McCaffrey, Sen. Sosnowski, Sen. Goodwin, Sen. Conley*

H-5671, S-410 – PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION ACT

This bill would prohibit the distribution of thin-film single-use plastic checkout bags in Rhode Island and require retailers to charge a small fee for paper bags. This bill will help prevent plastic pollution in Rhode Island's waterways and communities, including Narragansett Bay, reduce contaminated recycling loads, and incentivize Rhode Islanders to switch from disposable single-use shopping bags to reusable bags. **ECRI supports this bill with two amendments:** 1) amend the definition of "reusable bags" to require stitched handles, and 2) make the uniformity language the *minimum* statewide standard, rather than the *maximum*, allowing municipalities to enact stronger laws.

House Sponsors: *Rep. McEntee, Rep. Fellela, Rep. Constantino, Rep. Ucci, Rep. Handy*

Senate Sponsors: *Sen. Ruggiero, Sen. Sosnowski, Sen. Euer, Sen. Coyne, Sen. Valverde*

H-5667, S-552 – ENERGY AND CONSUMER SAVINGS ACT: EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

Energy efficiency is the easiest and most cost-effective way to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. This bill would establish new energy and water efficiency standards for appliances and other products sold in Rhode Island.

House Sponsors: *Rep. Bennett, Rep. Edwards, Rep. Jacquard, Rep. Diaz*

Senate Sponsors: *Sen. Satchell, Sen. Sosnowski, Sen. Seveny, Sen. Coyne, Sen. Valverde*

ECRI PRIORITY BILLS – IN OPPOSITION

H-5448, S-408 – PLASTICS PYROLYSIS SOLID WASTE AMENDMENTS

This bill would exempt plastics from being considered solid waste, creating a loophole in existing state law to circumvent the prohibition of incineration of solid waste. ECRI has long opposed incineration as a means of waste disposal as it creates myriad environmental and public health problems, with pyrolysis incentivizing the further production of single-use plastics and consumption of fossil fuels.

House Sponsors: *Rep. Ucci, Rep. Costantino, Rep. Quatrocchi, Rep. Fellela*

Senate Sponsors: *Sen. Lombardo, Sen. Lombardi, Sen. Archambault, Sen. Gallo*

ECRI AGENDA ITEMS

SUPPORT

H-5565, S-218: Eliminate PFAS from Food Packaging

H-5314, S-202: 'Ask First' Plastic Straw Bill

H-5665, S-659: Green New Deal Resolution

H-5813, S-663: Woodland Preservation Act

H-5826, S-447: Personal Care Products Disclosure

H- 5628, S-412: Climate Change Adaptation Fund

S-170: Conservation Easement Restrictions

S-268: Polystyrene Ban / Plastic Bag Bill

H-5446: Energy Facilities Siting Amendments (Burrillville bill)

S-596: Vulnerable Road User Protections

OPPOSE

H-5804: Energy Facility Siting Amendments (TEC-RI/OER bill)

The Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) is a coalition of over 60 Rhode Island organizations as well as individuals whose mission is to serve as an effective voice for developing and advocating policies and laws that protect and enhance the environment.

