



## The Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI)

### 2016 Legislative Agenda

#### ECRI PRIORITIES – IN FAVOR

##### **Budget Article 5, Question 3 -- Green Economy Bond**

This bond referendum, if approved by the General Assembly will appear on the November ballot. It asks Rhode Islanders to invest \$35 million in the state's growing "green economy" by continuing support for 7 effective programs. Historic State Park Development Program (\$7 M); State Land Acquisition Program (\$4 M); State Bikeway Development Program (\$10 M); Brownfield Remediation & Economic Development (\$5 M); Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program(\$3 M); Local Recreation Development Grant Program (\$2 M); and Local Open Spaces Grant Program (\$4M).

##### **H-7325 -- Energize RI Act**

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.

*Sponsors: Rep. Regunberg, Rep. Handy, Rep. Carson, Rep. Tobon, Rep. Bennett*

##### **H-7413 S-2185 -- Renewable Energy Standard Extension**

Rhode Island's Renewable Energy Standard (RES) (RIGL 39-26) sets requirements for utilities to purchase electricity from eligible renewable energy resources. Starting at 3% in 2007, the statute incrementally increases the percent of renewables, ending at 16% in 2019. Beginning in 2015, renewable energy advocates and the environmental community are working with the General Assembly to expand the obligation beyond 16%. H7413 and S2185 would extend the Renewable Energy Standard Schedule Program beyond 2019 to 2035. This extension has passed on the floor of the Senate.

*Sponsors: Rep. Ruggero, Rep. Jacquard, Rep. Craven, Rep. Carson, Rep. O'Grady, Sen. Sosnowski, Sen. Conley, Sen. Goodwin, Sen. Miller, Sen. Pichardo*

##### **H-7473 S-2181 -- Renewable Energy Growth Program Extension**

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. This extension has passed on the floor of the Senate.

*Sponsors: Rep. Ruggiero, Rep. Carson, Rep. Abney, Rep. Handy, Rep. Carnevale, Conley, Sen. Walaska, Sen. Paiva Weed, Sen. Conley, Sen. Kettle*

## **ECRI OPPOSES:**

### **H-7651 S-2591 -- Dry Lands**

In 2013, the legislature established a wetlands task force (Public Law 42-64.13-10) to evaluate if gaps exist in wetlands protection based on current scientific data, and to recommend standards that could foster a business climate to grow the state's economy while ensuring the protection of natural resources. Last session, legislation based on the task force recommendations was passed and RI DEM is currently developing regulations to implement the new legislation. These regulations should be finalized before additional changes to the wetlands laws are passed.

## **OTHER ECRI AGENDA ITEMS**

- H-7196, S-2233: Clarifies court review standards for proposed amendments to conservation easements
- H-7454, S-2450: Renewable energy fund extension, set to expire in 2016
- H-7606, S-2718: Increases penalties for intentionally damaging protected lands
- H-7724: Eliminate hard to dispose of items tax
- H-7819: Green buildings act amendments
- H-7915, S-2698: Requires disclosure of ingredients in cosmetic products
- H-7977: Phase out chemical flame retardants in furniture
- S-2095: Mercury reduction and education act, requiring manufacturers of mercury containing lamps to establish and implement a statewide collection program. Also requires DEM to develop thermostat recycling goals
- S-2798: Would require the Director of DEM to promulgate and adopt rules or regulations to prohibit and/or limit the application of pesticide products containing neonicotinoids