



Monthly Board Meeting

Monday, November 1, 2021 | 5 PM – 6:30 PM | Virtual on Zoom

ECRI Office Contact: environmentcouncil@earthlink.net

Attendees

Priscilla De la Cruz, Katherine Gibson, Meg Curran, Greg Gerritt, Kate Sayles, Darrell Brown, Terry Gray, Paige Therien, Steven Tadros, Eugenia Marks, Logan Torres, Nicholas Ucci, Peter Trafton, Nadia Grisaru, Hank Webster, Erica Hammond, Susan Korte, Barry Schiller, Everett Pope, Connie McGreavy, Jim Leach, Mal Skowron, Gregory Schultz, Nicole DiPaolo, Ryan Mulcahey, Justin Boyan, Sue AnderBois, Sheila (No Last name provided)

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions 5:00 – 5:15 PM

- a) Approval of October 4th meeting minutes
- b) Land Acknowledgement
- c) Office Report

2. President's Report and Strategic Planning update 5:15 – 5:20 PM

- a) ECRI community forum for strategic plan feedback - complete survey
- b) ECRI administrator recruitment - job posting on website
- c) Executive committee meeting Nov. 9th, 5 - 6pm, Zoom

3. Policy Committee and Climate Crisis Campaign upcoming meetings 5:20 – 5:25 PM

- a) Policy committee Nov. 8th, 4:30 - 6pm, Zoom
- b) Climate Crisis Campaign Nov. 15th, 10 - 11am, Zoom

4. Presentation and Discussion 5:25 - 6:25 PM: 2021 Act On Climate Implementation & DEM and OER Policy Priorities

- a) Director Terry Gray, RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM)
- b) Commissioner Nick Ucci, RI Office of Energy Resources (OER)

5. Announcements 6:25 – 6:30 PM

Adjourn

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

- a) **Approval of October 4th meeting minutes: Eugenia Marks made first motion to approve the minutes. Peter Trafton seconded this motion. All vote in favor with no abstentions or opposition.**
- b) Land acknowledgement: Priscilla shared [a link to Tomaguag Museum's trainings](#) and spoke on the nuanced lessons she learned, in regards to giving land acknowledgements, during a recent training with Audubon colleagues and facilitated by Loren Spears.
- c) Office Report (Greg Gerritt - environmentcouncil@earthlink.net)

- i) Ed fund Balance \$45173.45, about \$7K is for strategic planning, half of which will be dispersed to Resolve next week. ECRI Balance: \$41470.99 - Nov 1 2020 balance \$40263.03
- ii) GIC fiscal agency fee for grants and trade show will be coming in shortly.
- iii) I will send out the Ed fund end of the year appeal in about 3 weeks.
- iv) We have about 20 applications for the administrator position. The hiring committee will start reading resumes soon.
- v) Tisdale awards applications are out, encourage schools and after school programs to apply.
- vi) Video Festival will be asking for videos starting in a few weeks. Show will be in February - probably Feb 13, 2022.

2. President's Report and Strategic Planning update (Priscilla De La Cruz – pdelacruz@asri.org)

- a) ECRI Community Forum with consultant Resolve Conservation for strategic plan feedback on November 12th; 12 – 1:30 pm on Zoom
 - i) During this meeting, Resolve Conservation will present the draft ECRI strategic plan. This will be open to ECRI members including those who attended the summer 2021 trainings, and anyone else interested in giving their feedback.
- b) ECRI administrator recruitment - [job posting on ECRI website](#)
 - i) Hiring committee will be meeting to discuss applicants and will have more updates come December board member
- c) Executive committee meeting Nov. 9th, 5 - 6pm, Zoom

3. Policy Committee and Climate Crisis Campaign upcoming meetings (Kai Salem – kai@greenenergyconsumers.org)

- a) Act on Climate Implementation subgroup meet biweekly (next meeting is November 2, 12-1 pm, Zoom) – facilitated by Hank Webster, Acadia Center
- b) Policy committee (next meeting is November 8, 4:30 - 6pm, Zoom)
 - i) Need to pick a date for the January Legislative Coffee Hour
- c) ARPA (and other) funds subgroup organized by ECRI has been meeting to come up with a list of recommendations on spending (climate mitigation and resiliency projects with equity lens) – next meeting TBD
 - i) Sue Anderbois is facilitating – contact her or Priscila De La Cruz if you would like the meeting link at susan.anderbois@tnc.org or pdelacruz@asri.org
- d) Climate Crisis Campaign meet biweekly (next meeting is November 15th, 10 – 11 am, Zoom)
 - i) Focusing on Act On Climate implementation, particularly 100% Renewable Energy and Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI)
 - ii) Op-ed Project: ongoing campaign to help get opinion pieces on climate issues in publications around the state. At least two pieces should be published in the coming weeks
 - iii) Interim Green Report Card (next meeting is November 22, 10-11 am, Zoom) – Typically released by ECRI every two years, but we are working on an interim report after so many environmental bills passed during the 2021 legislative session.

4. Presentation and Discussion | Act On Climate Implementation & DEM and OER Policy Priorities

Director Terry Gray, RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and Commissioner Nick Ucci, RI Office of Energy Resources (OER)

[Presentation slides can be accessed here.](#)

- a) Priorities for 2022 – 2023
 - i) Leading on climate change and sustainability
 - [EC4](#)
 - ii) Modernizing protection of our environment
 - Technology and business processes
 - iii) Support Rhode Islanders getting outdoors
 - Keep momentum going after increase in visitation during pandemic
 - Wellness agenda

- iv) Support and grow natural resource-based businesses
 - Fisheries and farms
 - Clean up supply chain to keep food local
- v) Develop the Next Generation of Environmental Leaders
 - DEM Succession plan
 - Working with organizations and educators
- b) Currently working to update strategic plan – including the addition of an eighth goal: equity, justice and diversity.
- c) Governor McKee’s 2030 Vision for Rhode Island: <https://www.ri2030.com/>
- d) Current Operations, Enacted Budget for FY 2022, and FY 2023 Unconstrained budget – asked for 33 additional full-time employees (\$2 million) and includes significant commitment to RI environment
 - i) Drivers for investment include urgency shown with Act on Climate implementation
- e) 2022 Green Bond – proposal is currently at \$80 million
 - i) Potential additions include clean water and climate (climate may have it’s own separate bond)
- f) Federal Stimulus Proposals include sewer wastewater facility and green infrastructure, urban green spaces and tree equity, Galilee piers/bulkhead/facilities, DEM IT modernization, food security and supply chain resilience, marine fisheries
- g) 2022 Legislative Priorities
 - i) TCI – “I don’t believe that we can meet them mandates in the Act on climate, without a solid transportation strategy”
 - ii) PFAS
 - Mirroring a CT law that just passed on firefighting foams that contain PFAS
 - List some of the PFAS compounds as hazardous substances in Site Remediation Program
 - Drinking water standard will happen under health department – their changes would then trigger action on DEM’s part to protect ground and surface water
 - iii) Environmental Justice
 - Working on an environmental justice policy right now in advance of any any statutory change.
 - DEM Chief of Staff Makeba Hardy-Thomas is leading the Environmental Justice effort
 - iv) Underground Storage Tanks (UST) Fund Reforms (no further details given)
 - v) Plastics
 - Won’t be proposing anything but will be participating in dialogue on single-use plastic reduction.
- h) OER organizational structure: there are vacancies and OER encourages ECRI community (and beyond) to consider volunteering their time.
- i) Act On Climate deliverables
 - i) Climate Change Strategic Plan by 12/2025
 - ii) Updates to 2016 GHG Reduction Plan
 - iii) Develop public metrics and dashboard
- j) Decarbonization
 - i) Residential and commercial heating sectors are one the largest GHG emitting areas that need to be tackled and we currently have the fewest tools to do so; while the electric sector represents a significant amount of statewide emissions and the strongest foundation of policies and technologies to enable decarbonization.
 - ii) RI has strong foundations, especially in the electricity sector, that can be used in work towards decarbonization (although with their accelerated growth, many of these programs have presented other challenges - example: land use)
 - Established pathways to reach 100% renewables by 2030 First Offshore Wind in US – aim to build on this success
 - Founding member of regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
 - Nation-leading energy efficiency programs
 - Renewable energy programs
 - Offshore Wind – need to build on our success
 - iii) Heating Sector Transformation

- Electrify as many homes as we can. May 2020 report recommends keeping options open for commercial and industrial businesses for which electrification may not be ideal and since RI has significant natural gas network.
- iv) Clean Transportation
- TCI – at least 26% reduction in carbon emissions over 2022 (reporting only year)-2032 program period
 - Working with [RIPTA to electrify fleet](#) using Volkswagen settlement funds
 - Working on EV charging plan
 - [Mobility Innovation Working Group](#) is working on investment strategy for TCI funding
- k) Notable EC4 Priority Themes that haven't been touched upon during this meeting:
- Clean energy sector workforce development – including connecting with frontline communities to enable and empower them to participate in growth economic growth
- l) Initial Key AoC Workstreams
- Enhance EC4 – including more flexibility with meetings (around RI, stream virtual, more listening sessions, etc.) so more Rhode Islanders can be involved in decision making process. Monthly meetings: decision making session interspersed with working/listening sessions
 - Updates to 2016 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan – invites to sharing session to come
 - Climate Change Strategic plan
 - Public Dashboard & Metrics
 - Equity & Environmental Justice Engagement Strategy
- m) Organization: mitigation and resiliency
- i) Community Resiliency Discussions
- n) Q&A
- i) Is OER trying to get something in the DPUC's ultimate order in D-21-09 committing PPL, as new owner of the Narragansett Electric Company, to working with the state on implementing Act on Climate?
- There are strict requirements and regulations around how proceeding takes place and therefore no negotiations. However, OER and other stakeholders have issued questions to PPL, which were answered, regarding their intentions, approach and expertise in their implementation. On paper, PPL recognizes importance of modernizing grid and is committed to working with RI on electric sector transformation.
- ii) What type of updates can we expect by the end of next year to the 2016 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan?
- A lot has changed since 2016 (studies, policies, local and global science, etc.) – this needs to be compiled and reflected in updated plan.
 - This will be the topic of November EC4 meeting - upcoming listening session will talk about the scope of the updates (date/time TBD.)
- iii) Photo in slides showed a lot of parking. What incentives and strategies are being considered to reduce carbon through incentives for people to not use their cars?
- This is part of the dialogue of the Mobility Working Group and TCI investment plan but not much has been done so far.
 - Raises another point about brown spaces like parking lots which could provide space for solar car ports (which are more expensive to build due to increased labor and materials needs.) OER has committed some funding to the renewable energy fund to support solar on brownfields and looking at doing a separate carport program as well.
- iv) Concerns about the transportation sector (bicycles seem to be left out of 2022 Green Bonds, current highway expansion that encourages sprawl, no talk about electrification of commuter rail/better use of Amtrak, RIPTA public image/usage etc.) How can we best relate these concerns in some detail to the processes outlined?
- Dialogue about TCI in spring of 2022 to help figure out the best ways to use this money.
 - 2022 Green Bond – proposal is still in the works and ideas are welcome
 - EC4 dialogues – transportation will be on the agenda(s)
- v) Regarding natural gas supply/costs, the heating sector transformation report, and 2016 GHG plan updates: Would OER support an all-electric standard for new construction

- Not yet willing to commit to Net-zero building codes and policy mandates because economic studies had not been conducted yet.
- vi) Will any future offshore energy procurement have to wait until PPL takes the grid?
 - In addition to the administration change, it has delayed procurement processes. Waiting on further indications on how PPL will approach decarbonization. This is a good opportunity to look at procurement laws.
- vii) Partnering with community organizations?
 - Always looking to connect with organizations and community groups on any environmental issues and projects.
- viii) We're looking for volunteer members of advisory committees - they require lots of work - shouldn't they be compensated?
 - Have not compensated people in the past. Have not yet figured out a model for compensation, but it is being discussed.
- ix) Free parking for advisory committees' volunteers increases traffic that might be avoided by distributing or virtual meetings, no?
 - Many are being held virtually but the Open Meetings Act has caused many bodies to be required to meet in person.

5. Announcements

- a) December 6th ECRI meeting – have extended invitation to RIPTA for presentation
- b) Everett Pope would like to invite someone researching mushrooms' water-cleaning abilities to a 2022 meeting.
- c) Acadia Center has a new report going out this week about Utility Reform and will hold a webinar in a couple weeks as well. [Reforming Energy System Planning for Equity and Climate Transformation](#)
- d) Governor's 2030 upcoming listening sessions: ECRI encourages individual members to submit their own comments and attend the sessions but ECRI will also be doing joint comment, so members should be ready to get involved with that.
- e) Thank you to everyone who took the Land and Water Conservation Summit survey!

Adjourn