



Monthly Board Meeting

Monday, April 4, 2022 | 5 PM – 6:30 PM | Virtual via Zoom

Office Contact: info@environmentcouncilri.org

Attendees

Jamie Rhodes, Greg Gerrit, Taylor Iascone, Susan Korte, Erica Hammond, Kai Salem, Mal Skowron, Barry Schiller, Eugenia Marks, Barbara Walsh, Barbara Watts, Peter Trafton, Mary Howe, David Veliz, Hank Webster, Kenneth J. Filarski, Angie Koziaro, Everett Pope, Kathie Gibson, Sue AnderBois, Kathie Gibson, Meg Curran

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions 5:00 – 5:20 PM
 - a. Land acknowledgement and introductions
 - b. Approval of March meeting minutes
 - c. Office Report
2. Policy Committee and Climate Crisis Campaign: 5:20 - 6:05 PM
 - a. ECRI policy priorities survey - members, please complete ASAP
 - b. Vote & discussion on newly introduced bill since last PolComm 3/14
 - c. Next policy committee (PolComm) meeting 4/11 at 4:30 PM
 - d. Climate Crisis Campaign and Act On Climate Implementation
 - e. ECRI Earth Day (Lobby Day), May 11th at the State House
3. Equity-based Strategic Plan Implementation 6:05 - 6:15
 - a. Updates and next steps www.environmentcouncilri.org/content/strategic-planning
4. President's Report 6:15 - 6:20 PM
5. Next executive committee (ExComm) meeting 4/12 at 5 PM
 - a. Nominations
6. Announcements 6:20
7. Adjourn by 6:30 PM

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Land acknowledgement and introductions
 - b. Approval of [March meeting minutes](#)
 - i. **Peter Trafton makes a motion to approve the March 2022 minutes. Greg Gerrit seconds. No opposition or abstention. March 2022 minutes approved.**
 - c. Office Report
 - i. ECRI presentation to other National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) virtual annual meeting in June about ECRI's strategic planning process this far (what we have learned, accomplished, etc.) If chosen

- to present, the Executive Committee (ExComm), as well as anyone else who was involved in the process, will work to put together the agenda for presentation.
- ii. Capacity building grant that NWF provided for ECRI's strategic plan is due April 15 – draft to be finalized by Executive Committee
 - iii. Nominations Committee is meeting next week to finalize descriptions of officers, debrief on conversations with potential nominees, and draft a call to actino for membership to step into officer roles. Stipends for officers as needed/requested are being considered as a result of reflection on membership/board policies. Officer nominations will be discussed at the next ExComm meeting.
 - iv. Environment-focused Gubernatorial forum in the fall
 1. Suggestion: also host a Lieutenant Governor forum?
 2. RI Sierra Club will also be hosting a Gubernatorial forum at the end of May
 - v. Raised \$300 in 401Gives from the Tisdale Awards. Plan to do a second round of fundraising for awards.
 - vi. Finances: **Contact ECRI administrator Jamie Rhodes** for status (details of current finances are open to all and will be reported on in detail at ExComm meeting)
2. Policy Committee and Climate Crisis Campaign (Kai Salem - kai@greenenergyconsumers.org)
- a. Legislative and PolComm Updates
 - i. A large number of environmental bills have been introduced this past month – thank you to the work of ECRI members!
 - ii. 100% Renewable Electricity has been heard in both House and Senate.
 - iii. Second ECRI coffee hour held on March 25 - Senate Environment Chair Dawn Euer and House Environment Chair David Bennet spoke - [ECRI Legislative Agenda circulated for event.](#)
 - iv. Last PolComm meeting was extra long due to the volume of legislation that needed to be discussed as well as how we are going to decide on priorities.
 - v. 100% Renewable Electricity rally hosted by Climate Jobs RI – date is TBD (it will be held when Senate holds their vote)
 - vi. Sale of National Grid to PPL has officially been stayed until further hearings by the RI Superior Court (DPUC had improperly defined “public interest”)
 - b. Climate Crisis Campaign and Act On Climate Implementation Subcommittees
 - i. Latest Climate Crisis Campaign focused mainly on 100% Renewable Electricity. Consensus is this will face similar opposition to the 2021 Act On Climate bill.
 - ii. Act On Climate Implementation has been attending RI administration's EC4 advisory board meetings as well as the listening sessions.
 1. Chat question: “Is there any progress from the EC4 group to have EJ [environmental justice] input on act on climate?
 - a. ECRI has been consistently pressuring the administration – no changes to report on currently.
 - c. ECRI policy priorities survey - members, please complete due by 4/8/22
 - i. Reviewing results and deciding on two to five top priorities for the rest of the season at next PolComm meeting. These will then be sent to the full board for a vote.
 - ii. What is considered a successful amount of votes? At least 30 - last year we received 40 votes.
 - d. Vote on ECRI legislative agenda & discussion newly introduced bill since last PolComm 3/14
 - i. [Here is the ECRI legislative agenda](#) prepared and voted upon in time for March 25th Coffee Hour – five bills have been introduced since then but only four of these received required PolComm votes to be recommended to the full board for adding to agenda.
 1. Bills recently introduced that PolComm recommends adding to legislative agenda: H7851, which requires consideration of GHG emissions in transportation planning (SUPPORT); H7788, which phases out inefficient and toxic mercury lightbulbs (fluorescent lighting), (SUPPORT); S2740 Labor standards in renewable energy projects (SUPPORT) (introduced

since last PolComm meeting, Climate Jobs priority); H7971/S2583 Offshore wind procurement (SUPPORT) (currently on watch list)

- ii. Have not yet been formally voted on by the full board but are already listed on the agenda linked above: Environmental Justice Zone Act S 2087 – passed the Senate and has hearing in the House this week; Electric Transportation Act would phase out gas cars by 2030; Bottle Deposit bill; Extended Producer Responsibility Bill
- iii. Questions
 1. RIPTA and RIDOT both rely on gas tax for revenue – with EVs not paying gas taxes, how will we replace that revenue?
 - a. RI is a long ways a way from having that be a problem in RI (only about 4,000 of 800,000 cars in RI are electric so loses have been minimal)
 - b. Moving forward as EV sales grow, the RIDOT plans to propose alternatives for both highway maintenance (RIDOT) and RIPTA (operating funds)
 - c. Some states are already experimenting with other types of revenue alternatives
 2. What is the relationship between 100 Renewable Electricity and solar sprawl that is decreasing forestland?
 - a. 100% RE is based on the regional market and the vast majority of the 100% will be made up for by offshore wind (about 15% will be solar from anywhere in the region and/or other future offshore wind projects) Virtual Net Metering is the main policy that is driving solar development in green spaces. H 7531 (which many ECRI members have been working on) will remove incentives for development on core forests, sets protections on core forests, and incentivizes solar development on preferred (previously disturbed/developed) sites.
- iv. **Greg Gerritt makes a motion to approve the legislative agenda proposed by the ECRI Policy Committee. Kenneth Filarski seconds.**
 1. **Eugenia Marks offers an amendment to H 7531: ECRI should advocate for a smaller acreage. Peter Trafton seconds.**
 - a. Clarifying: Should ECRI vote to “support with amendments?”; Answer is “Yes”
 - b. **Kai moves to remove H 7531 from the agenda for further discussion and that the full board votes on the rest of the proposed agenda. Eugenia Marks seconds. Greg Gerritt opposed.**
- v. **Kai Salem makes a motion for the ECRI board to accept PolComm’s recommendations and accept the agenda without H 7531. Eugenia Marks seconds. David Veliz, Mal Skowron, and Erica Hammond abstained. Legislative agenda is approved.**
 1. Continuation of H 7531 conversation
 - a. 250 acreage limits in the bill
 - i. This number is not about solar sites that take up 250 acres (we do not have this in RI.) It is about prohibiting sites in areas of contiguous forest of 250 acres or more.
 1. This bill say that in any part of forest land 250 acres or larger there is to be no solar of any size.
 - ii. Core forests are important for habitat and connects us with the great habitat regions
 - iii. We’ve been working on this bill for six or seven years. Bill sponsors and other legislators are getting pushback on ANY limit. We need to support something this year that actually has a chance of passing and in the meantime a lot of forested land is being lost.

- iv. Also in the bill: Renewable Energy Growth Program caveat that says the PUC and DG Board have to include location and climate resilience in pricing. This bill will put limits on the Virtual Net Metering Bill.
 - b. There will likely be a SubA
 - i. There will be opposition on the other side. It will be helpful for those who would like to see a smaller acreage to voice that.
 - c. Webinar on this topic hosted by advocates working on the bill will happen soon.
 - d. Greg Geritt moves to put this bill back on the ECRI legislative agenda. Mg Curran seconds. Eugenia Marks, Barbara Walsh, Angie Koziara, and Erica Hammond abstain. No opposition. H 7531 is approved on the ECRI legislative agenda.**
 - e. Next policy committee (PolComm) meeting 4/11 at 4:30 PM – may be another two-hour meeting. Agenda items for PolComm meetings can be sent to Kai Salem.
 - i. RI Offshore Wind subcommittee meets once a month – big month because legislation related to offshore wind was introduced.
 - ii. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative goes through regular program reviews to update policies and procedures. There is currently one underway right now with a goal to be more equitable (how to reduce pollution in frontline communities (Climate Justice Alliance had sent a letter with recommendations.)
 - f. ECRI Earth Day (Lobby Day), May 4th at the State House
 - i. ECRI’s first in-person event in more than two years! Unconfirmed speaking lineup includes Attorney General.
- 3. Equity-based Strategic Plan Implementation
 - a. Updates/next steps and documents: www.environmentcouncilri.org/content/strategic-planning
 - b. Shifting energy towards onboarding a facilitator to help coordinate our next steps, including the implementations group. Our volunteer board does not have the capacity to do this without a facilitator.
 - i. Proposal for onboarding a facilitator will be discussed at next ExComm meeting.
- 4. Next executive committee (ExComm) meeting 4/12 at 5 PM
 - a. Nominations
- 5. Announcements
 - a. [2nd Annual Seeds of Faith Earth Day Event](#)
- 6. Adjourn by 6:30 PM