

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI)

The Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) is a coalition of more than 60 Rhode Island organizations that advocate for policies to protect and enhance the environment. Our policy priorities would address some of Rhode Island's most pressing environmental issues.

June 6, 2023

Beverage Bottle Recycling Act (S753/H5502) Senator Valverde and Representative McEntee

Establishes a container deposit system— a 10¢ refundable deposit. Empty beverage bottles are scattered throughout Rhode Island. Our current recycling program fails to collect them, and tons of bottles are buried in our landfill every year. This bill is carefully crafted to succeed with redemption, recycling and reuse. (HFFS 4.26; 3.23)

“Solar Siting Reform” Net Metering (S684/H5853) Senator DiMario and Representative Speakman

Shifts state-level incentives for solar outside of core forests— defining them in state law as unfragmented forest blocks of single or multiple parcels 250 acres or greater. This collaborative bill seeks to balance RI's need for protecting our forests and developing solar. It discontinues incentives for solar development in core forests and expands incentives for solar energy development outside core forests and with caps. It also promotes strong labor standards. (HFFS 3.29; 4.5)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:

Environmental Justice Act (S770/H6196) Senator Euer and Representative Alzate (S:passed 5.4; H: HFFS 3.30)

Creates a definition of Environmental Justice Areas, requires RI DEM to create a list of Environmental Justice Areas. It establishes requirements to be met by any applicant seeking a permit for developments with environmental or cumulative impacts within a specified Environmental Justice Area.

Green Justice Zones (S909/6357) Senator Mack and Representative Morales (Neither heard by 6.5) Establishes a first-in-state Green Justice Zone specifying locally determined rehabilitation of environmental and public health impacts. Future projects that threaten air or water pollution, including cumulative impacts, will require community approval. A Green Justice Zone board will oversee and manage the work required to remediate the zone.

BUILDING ENERGY EMISSIONS:

Building Performance Standards (S166/H5425) Senator Gu and Representative Kislak (HFFS 5.16;3.9) Requires tracking energy use and greenhouse gas emissions from residential and commercial buildings, gradually extending to smaller ones. After collecting data, standards would be set for progressively reduced emissions.

Building Code Updates (S855/H6101) Senator Gu and Representative Edwards

Requires the RI Building Code Standards Committee to adopt updated provisions of the International Energy Conservation Code with 100% required compliance, including electric readiness. (HFFS 5.16; 4.5)

CALIFORNIA VEHICLE EMISSIONS STANDARDS (S195/H6055) Senator DiMario and Representative Cortvriend

Requires that the RI DEM adopt motor vehicle emission standards based on those of California which requires that motor vehicle manufacturers steadily increase their percentage of electric vehicles to 100% by 2035. A similar program specifies progressive electrification of newly built trucks. (195:postponed 5.10/ 6055: HFFS 3.30)

FARMLAND PRESERVATION FUNDS (S560/H6018) Senator DiPalma and Representative McGaw

Allots \$5 million to the RI DEM for preservation, protection, and conservation of farmlands in Rhode Island, enabling critical matches for federal funding for the preservation of farmland for local food production. (HFFS 5.25; 5.17)



ECRI Legislative Agenda 2023

Senate #	House #	SUPPORTED BILLS	Senate Sponsor	House Sponsor
	5763	Equity Impact Statement Act		Kisklak
527	6110	Requires explanation of how budget furthers equity	Acosta	Cortvriend
518	5847	Creates income related utility support - "PIPP"	Sosnowski	Slater
771	5493	Labor Standards in Renewable Energy Projects	Britto	Potter
551	6105	RI Climate Change ...Workforce Development Act	Lawson	Cortvriend
558	6106	RI Climate Change ... Education Program Act	Lawson	Cortvriend
506	5033	Removes net-metering prior consumption limits, etc.	Valverde	Potter
	5550	Mercury Reduction & Education Act: LEDs instead		Handy
468	5849	Amends gas utility regs to stop rewarding growth	Sosnowski	Solomon
	5850	2023 Electric Energy Storage Act		Handy
	5851	Solar Neighborhoods Act (Building Codes for solar)		Boylan
30	5198	50%+ of State's vehicle fleet zero-emission by 2031	Ujifusa	McGaw
921	6259	RIPTA must study & trial improved rural paratransit	DiMario	
59	5621	Rideshare vehicle surcharges to improve streets	Kallman	Dawson
326	5220	Regulates electric bicycles like human-powered	Euer	Kislak
	5600	All Electric Building Act (required after 2024)		Cortvriend
307	5938	Zoning for Middle Housing required in cities >20,000	Mack	Henries
31	5551	DOT should user pollinator-friendly roadside plants	Miller	Cortvriend
201	5171	Large food waste producers must compost (30 miles)	Valverde	Cortvriend
2	5007	Lead Poisoning Prevention Act	Ruggerio	O'Brien
	5318	Lead Poisoning Prevention Act (with IIJA funding)		Morales
804	6239	Requires landlords to register lead water pipes	Euer & AG	Ackerman
196	5673	Comprehensive PFAS Ban Act	Kallman	Cortvriend
131	5142	Prohibits any new high-heat waste facilities	Ujjifusa	McGaw
14	5090	Prohibits disposable styrofoam food containers	Miller	Bennett
15	5471	Bans state buying plastics. Adds energy efficiency.	Miller	Boylan
501	5966	Creates full-time staff attorney for CRMC	DiMario	Handy
244	5324	Joint Resolution funding RI State Conservation Committee	DiPalma	Chippendale
418	5914	Requires liberal interpretation of conservation restrictions	DiPalma	Craven
504	6388	Renewable Ready Program - for compromised solar sites	DiMario	Speakman
607	5864	Prohibits captive animal hunting	LaMountain	Slater
	6056	Establishes a Chief Coastal Resilience Officer		Spears
636		Racial Impact Assessment Act	Mack	
234	5622	Bans RIPTA from charging public fares	Kallman	Felix
537	6008	Build schools per latest NE-CHPS Regs	Pearson	Handy
1079	5902	Payment of Wages (↑Criminal penalties for wage theft)	Kallman	Craven
962		Resolution: Reduce electricity costs for off-peak EV charging	DiMario	
	5627	Exempts bicycles from sales tax		Handy
	6020	Fund \$25 Mil. via Statewide Planning for Bike Mobility Plan		Tanzi
	5623	Home Heating GHG Reduction Act (funds geothermal networks)		Cortvriend
862		Tax exemptions for defined urban & small farmers	Mack	
724	5861	Water suppliers with elevated PFAS must treat to reduce	Felag	Speakman
	6342	Resolution: Study Forest Management to reduce fire impact		Spears

ECRI Legislative Agenda 2023

BILLS TO WATCH				
	5344	Prohibits forestry in "old growth forests"		Shanley
772	6034	Replaces CRMC with DEPARTMENT, etc	Gu	Tanzi
712		RIPTA funds from motor fuel tax	Cano	
113	5390	State to maintain sidewalks beside St. Rds.	Rogers	Nardone
61	5172	EFSA: must consider GHG emissions	Ujifusa	McGaw
205	5527	S&HR: Study Tech & Economics of DeCarb.	Bell	Morales
467	5549	Zero-emission lawn devices 2025; 2028	Zurier	Kislak
471		City & town bans on I.C.E. lawn equipt.	Zurier	
520		JtRes funds rebates - electric leaf blowers	Zurier	
1093	6001	Authorizes RIPTA Hub on Dorrance St. Providence	Miller	O'Brien
466	5656	RI Energy to prune trees on right-of-ways - "tree wardens"	DiMario	Kazarian
BILLS TO OPPOSE				
	5363	Removes state & towns from recreation liability coverage		Craven
	6160	Pesticide supervisor's presence no longer required		Noret
	5940	Requires less low- and moderate- income housing		Chippendale
	5941	Qualifies more private homes as LMI housing		Chippendale
	5865	Sets impossible requirements on solar & wind power		P. Morgan
591	5852	Requires each solar project to be "carbon neutral"	Rogers	Quattrocchi
499	6178	Sets impossible requirements on solar & wind power	de la Cruz	Newberry
174	5663	Adds obstructive requirements to solar contracts	DeLuca	Rea
	5675	Requires RIRRC disposal of all solar panels, with fee		P. Morgan
204	5945	Increases EFSB to 5 and revises its processes	de la Cruz	Place
		<i>Opposed are unchanged from May 1</i>		