

# Environment Council of Rhode Island

## Rhode Island General Assembly

# 2006 Green Report Card

### General Assembly Earns 'B' for Environmental Legislation

The Environment Council of Rhode Island gives the Rhode Island General Assembly a 'B' grade for its handling of environmental issues in 2005 and 2006. The Assembly passed seven top priorities of the Environment Council and its members in this past term. These are listed below with their Senate and House sponsors.

- The **Mercury Free Vehicle Act** to prevent mercury from auto parts from entering into the environment (**Ruggerio, Handy, Ginaitt**).
- A **package of energy legislation** to increase energy efficiency and conservation, reduce energy bills and cut pollution from power plants (**Walaska, Fox, Roberts, Handy**).
- **Banning toxic MTBE** from gasoline, which has been found in the groundwater of 23 cities and towns across Rhode Island (**Felag, Ginaitt**).
- The **Anti-Idling Act** which eliminates unnecessary diesel engine idling and requires DEM to assess strategies for a further reduction in diesel pollution (**Alves, Sullivan**).
- The **Electronic Waste Prevention, Re-use and Recycling Act** which creates an e-waste disposal ban that begins in 2008. (**Sosnowski, Handy**).

- A joint resolution to **study all aspects of the Kent County Water Authority** (**Lenihan, Sullivan**).
- A law which **clarifies procedures for advocacy groups to participate in ballot advocacy** (**Pacheco**).

The Environment Council of Rhode Island's 2006 Green Report Card provides a comprehensive look at the environmental voting records of General Assembly members during the 2005 and 2006 legislative sessions.

The report card covers a broad range of environmental issues reflecting the diverse interests of our member organizations including: clean air, clean water, protecting open space, clean and renewable energy, wildlife habitat, sustainable land use, transportation, toxic chemicals and open accountable governance.

#### See inside!

- Gov. Carcieri Gets Mixed Reviews on the Environment
- Energy Stars and Honor Roll
- Missed Opportunities
- Grades for General Assembly Members

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# Governor Gets Mixed Reviews on the Environment

Nearing the end of his first term, Gov. Carcieri has earned mixed reviews on addressing priority environmental issues. While the governor has won kudos for adopting California's Clean Cars Standards for new cars and trucks, supporting the Clean Water and Open Space Bond of 2004, signing executive orders to require all new state vehicles and buildings to be energy efficient, encouraging the development of clean, renewable energy and opposing the proposed port at Quonset, he has also fallen short on important initiatives.

The most significant of Gov. Carcieri's shortcomings include his slow progress to protect Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island's watersheds, failing to join the regional initiative to reduce global warming pollution from power plants, sapping legal and other programs through bone-cutting budget stipulations, and being less accessible to the environmental community than his predecessors.

## Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island's Watersheds

Fish kills during the summer of 2003 outraged the public, and in October 2003 the governor responded with a bold stand on Bay protection. By Executive Order, he formed the **Governor's Narragansett Bay and Watershed Planning Commission** to "advise and make recommendations to the governor and the General Assembly for developing a strategic long-term plan for the bay and its watershed..."

The Commission engaged leaders throughout the state on 10 planning panels, whose recommendations were presented in March 2004. In July 2004, the governor responded with specific charges to executive agencies, by introducing and supporting the **2004 Clean Water and Open Space Bond** and by introducing

cesspool phase out legislation in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

The 2003 fish kills also led to House and Senate action on the Bay. At the end of the 2004 legislative session, the legislature created the **Rhode Island Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team** to develop a systems-level plan for the Bay and its watershed, and to coordinate the activities of the executive agencies implementing the plan. The legislation directed the governor to appoint a chair to lead the Team "within 4 months of the passage." The governor was extremely slow to respond to this charge. Although Gov. Garrahy, also chair of the Governor's Bay Planning Commission agreed to serve in the interim, a nomination for a chair was not made until April of 2005. This nominee was not confirmed by the Senate and withdrew in January 2006. A second nomination, Dr. Ames Colt, was finally made and confirmed in the final month of the 2006 legislative session.

Although a systems-level plan has not been written, the Coordination Team did meet in the interim, focusing on the development of a monitoring strategy and advocating for funding from the governor and general assembly. Monitoring funds were proposed by the governor, but cut during the 2005 session. The governor's original budget in 2006 did not include monitoring funds, although a budget article was introduced later in the session. Ultimately, an allocation of \$250,000 was approved, less than one quarter of the requested amount. Neither the \$25 million **Clean Water Bond** issue nor the **Cesspool Phase Out Act** were successfully shepherded through the assembly in 2006.

*(Continued on back page)*

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# 2006 Green Honor Roll

ECRI is proud to count as environmental heroes, the legislators earning a spot on our Green Report Card Honor Roll. These leaders not only consistently voted in support of environmental bills, but also sponsored key bills and worked both publicly and behind the scenes on behalf of the environment.

**Rep. Ray Gallison**  
**Rep. Paul Moura**  
**Rep. Amy Rice**  
**Rep. Ray Sullivan**  
**Rep. Bruce Long**

**Sen. Walter Felag**  
**Sen. Michael Lenihan**  
**Sen. Rhoda Perry**  
**Sen. Elizabeth Roberts**

We also want to commend the legislative leadership, which worked with us to win our environmental victories. Special thanks go to **Speaker Murphy, Majority Leader Fox, Senate President Montalbano, and Senate Majority Leader Paiva-Weed.**

## ★ Energy Stars

This year, we would like to bestow a special honor of Energy Star upon several legislators who, over the past several years, have helped Rhode Island adopt one of the nation's best overall energy policies. Through these members' leadership, the General Assembly has passed the Clean Energy Act which will require 16% of Rhode Island's energy to come from clean renewable sources by 2020; passed and strengthened the Energy and Consumer Savings Act to require stronger energy efficiency standards for common appliances than the federal government; and passed the Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act to promote renewable energy projects and direct the state to consider energy efficiency and other long-term costs and savings when purchasing energy.

**Senate President Joseph Montalbano**  
**Majority Leader Teresa Paiva Weed**  
**Sen. Susan Sosnowski**  
**Sen. William Walaska**  
**Sen. David Bates**

**Majority Leader Gordon Fox**  
**Rep. Peter Ginaitt**  
**Rep. Art Handy**  
**Rep. Brian Patrick Kennedy**

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# Environment Council of Rhode Island

## 2006 Green Report Card

### State Senate

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Bill Points	Sponsor Points	Total Points	Grade
Algieri	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	89	0	89	B
Alves	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	-	75	0	75	C
Badeau	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	-	85	0	85	B
Bates	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	89	6	95	A
Blais	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	0	-	+	-	73	0	73	C
Breene	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	82	0	82	B
Caprio	+	0	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	81	0	81	B
Ciccone	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	-	88	0	88	B
Connors	+	+	+	-	+	+	0	-	0	+	+	0	+	0	+	0	+	-	77	3	80	B
Cote	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	0	+	0	80	0	80	B
Damiani	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	-	-	NG	0	0	No Grade
DaPonte	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	82	0	82	B
Doyle	+	0	+	-	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	80	0	80	B
Felag	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89	3	92	A
Fogarty	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	94	0	94	A
Gallo	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	82	0	82	B
Gibbs	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	89	7	96	A
Goodwin	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	76	0	76	C
Issa	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	-	87	0	87	B
Lanzi	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	88	0	88	B
Lenihan	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	88	0	88	B
Levesque	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	88	0	88	B
McBurney	+	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	+	-	90	0	90	A
McCaffrey	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89	3	92	A
Metts	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	88	0	88	B
Montalbano	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	82	0	82	B
Paiva Weed	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	88	0	88	B
Perry	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	0	+	0	+	+	81	14	95	A
Pichardo	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	83	0	83	B
Polisena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	89	3	92	A
Raptakis	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	-	81	-3	78	C
Revens	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	78	0	78	C
Roberts	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	94	3	97	A
Ruggerio	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	-	88	3	91	A
Sheehan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89	3	92	A
Sosnowski	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	94	10	104	A+
Tassoni	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	89	0	89	B
Walaska	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	78	3	81	B

# Environment Council of Rhode Island

## 2006 Green Report Card

### State House of Representatives

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Bill Points	Sponsor Points	Total Points	Grades
Ajello	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	94	3	97	A
Almeida	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	o	+	-	87	0	87	B
Amaral	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	o	+	-	-	78	0	78	C
Anguilla	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	o	o	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	o	o	75	0	75	C
Brien, T	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	o	+	o	+	+	o	+	+	+	o	-	-	73	0	73	C
Caprio	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	-	+	+	-	78	0	78	C
Carter	+	+	+	-	+	+	o	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	74	0	74	C
Church	+	o	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	78	0	78	C
Coderre	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	-	82	0	82	B
Corvese	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	83	-3	80	B
Costantino	+	+	+	-	+	+	o	-	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	82	0	82	B
Crowley	+	o	+	-	o	+	o	o	o	o	+	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	NG	0	0	No Grade
Davey	+	+	+	+	+	o	-	o	o	o	+	+	+	o	+	o	o	-	o	75	0	75	C
Dennigan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	89	2	91	A
DeSimone	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	o	+	+	o	+	+	o	+	-	o	69	0	69	D
Diaz	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	o	-	83	0	83	B
Ehrhardt	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	o	+	+	89	0	89	B
Faria	+	o	+	+	+	+	-	o	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	81	0	81	B
Flaherty	+	+	+	o	o	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	-	o	o	o	79	0	79	C
Fox	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	7	91	A
Gallison	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	6	90	A
Gemma	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	-	-	83	0	83	B
Giannini	+	o	+	o	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	82	0	82	B
Ginaitt	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	89	24	113	A+
Gorham	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	56	0	56	F
Handy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	94	18	112	A+
Jackson	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	0	84	B
Jacquard	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	o	o	o	+	+	+	+	+	o	o	o	-	79	0	79	C
Kennedy	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	84	0	84	B
Kilmartin	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	o	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	76	2	78	C
Lally	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	0	84	B
Landroche	+	o	+	-	+	o	o	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	75	0	75	C
Laroche	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	-	+	82	0	82	B
Lewiss	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	79	2	81	B
Lima	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	o	78	0	78	C
Long	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	89	7	96	A
Loughlin	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	63	0	63	D
Malik	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	o	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	-	-	81	0	81	B

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## 2006 Green Report Card

### State House of Representatives

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Bill Points	Sponsor Points	Total Points	Grade
McCauley	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	+	0	0	+	0	82	0	82	B
McHugh	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	82	0	82	B
McManus	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	0	-	-	+	72	0	72	C
McNamara	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	-	94	2	96	A
Melo	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	89	0	89	A
Menard	+	-	+	+	0	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	+	76	0	76	C
Moffitt	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	75	0	75	C
Moran	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	78	0	78	C
Moura	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	89	8	97	A
Mumford	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	0	+	+	+	0	-	-	0	53	0	53	F
Murphy, W.J.	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	0	84	B
Naughton	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	95	3	98	A
O'Neill	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	76	0	76	C
Pacheco	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	79	3	82	B
Palumbo	0	0	+	0	+	+	0	-	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	-	77	0	77	C
Petrarca	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	-	-	71	0	71	C
Picard	+	0	+	-	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	82	0	82	B
Rice	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	88	0	88	B
Rose	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	83	0	83	B
San Bento	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	0	+	+	+	0	0	+	-	80	0	80	B
Savage	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	-	-	76	0	76	C
Schadone	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	-1	83	B
Scott	+	0	+	0	+	+	0	-	0	0	-	+	+	+	0	-	0	-	0	58	0	58	F
Shanley	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	78	0	78	C
Singleton	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	0	0	+	0	+	+	-	0	-	+	77	0	77	C
Slater	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	-	82	0	82	B
Smith	0	0	+	+	+	+	-	0	0	0	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	-	-	77	0	77	C
Story	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	79	0	79	C
Sullivan	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	84	7	91	A
Trillo	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	0	+	-	+	+	+	+	0	-	-	0	53	0	53	F
Ucci	+	0	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	82	0	82	B
Voccola	+	+	+	+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	0	NG	0	0	No Grade
Wasylyk	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	0	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	0	+	-	88	0	88	B
Watson	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	58	0	58	F
Williams	+	0	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	0	0	+	+	+	+	0	-	-	80	0	80	B
Williamson	0	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	-	82	0	82	B
Winfield	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	0	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	89	0	89	B

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## Brief Description of Bills

1. **Mercury Free Vehicle Act** (S611a, H5911a) A vote to require auto manufacturers to pay for the collection and disposal of mercury-containing auto switches. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
2. **Energy and Consumer Savings Act** (S540, H5307) A vote to establish efficiency standards for common household appliances, such as residential furnaces and boilers. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
3. **Ban MTBE** (S770, H6117) A vote to ban MTBE in gasoline. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
4. **Medical Waste Disposal** (H5786, H6519) A vote to exclude regulated medical waste from the definition of solid waste. A vote against was scored +. Bill passed senate, referred to house.
5. **Electronic Waste Producer Responsibility Act** (S2509, H7789) A vote to ban toxic electronic waste from the landfill. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
6. **Commission to Study All Aspects of the Kent County Water Authority** (S2262, H7024) A vote to create a special legislative commission. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
7. **Anti-Idling Act** (S2767, H7756) A vote to reduce air pollution by prohibiting the unnecessary idling of diesel engines. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
8. **Water Allocation Bill** (S2681) A vote to provide public water to biotechnology manufacturing facilities located within the Kent County Water District. A vote against was scored +. Bill passed.
9. **LNG Siting Act** (H6731) A vote to require 5000 feet from any LNG tank to the nearest residential home, elderly housing complex, school, hospital, health care facility, and business, and 1.5 miles from any LNG as it traverses the state's waters to the nearest residential home, elderly complex. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
10. **Dental Mercury Pollution Prevention Act** (H7812) A vote to require dental offices to reduce the release of dental mercury into the environment. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
11. **Ballot Campaign Expenditures** (S2797, H7529) A vote to develop reporting requirements for amounts spent on ballot questions. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
12. **Bicycle Safety** (H7224) A vote to require drivers of motor vehicles involved in a collision with a bicyclist to immediately stop, call the police, and render reasonable aid to any injured parties. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
13. **RIPTA Separation of Powers** (S2138) A vote to remove legislators and legislative appointees from the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
14. **Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act** (S2903, H8025) A vote to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy to reduce energy costs for Rhode Island consumers. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
15. **Stump Dump Act** (S2048, H6828) A vote to include tree stumps to be disposed within the definition of solid waste. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
16. **International Trade Agreements** (H6885) A vote to require the legislature's approval for the governor to commit Rhode Island to the procurement rules of an international trade agreement. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
17. **Guidelines for Evaluation of Natural Resource Values** (S2497) A vote to set guidelines and standards for evaluating natural resource values of state open space properties prior to transferring the property or changing its use. A vote in favor was scored +. Bill passed.
18. **(Senate only) Protect Big River Management Area** (S1185) A vote to allow the state police to build a State Police headquarters facility on land designated as open space in the Big River Reservoir area. A vote against was scored +.
18. **(House only) Cesspool Phase-out Act** (S2505, H7699) A vote to phase out cesspools that present the greatest risk to health and/or the environment. A vote in favor was scored +. Committee recommended measure be held for further study.
19. **(House only) Coastal Resources Management Council** (H8290) A House resolution to request the Supreme Court to determine the general assembly's role in appointing members of the CRMC in light of Separation of Powers. A vote against was scored +. House passed.

### Key to the Grades

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| + = Voted for the ECRI position     | o = Did not vote   |
| - = Voted against the ECRI position | NG = No Grade, insufficient votes on priority bills to determine grade |
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## The Rating System

Rating systems cannot adequately account for work that goes on behind the scenes at the legislature. Good bills are often defeated in committee or through procedural maneuvers that do not result in floor votes that can be counted. By the same token, bad bills are often defeated the same way. Counting only votes on the floor of the Assembly, therefore, would fail to capture the true contribution of individual legislators to the outcome of environmental legislation.

In an attempt to allocate credit more accurately, we include not only floor votes, but also sponsorship of bills, both good and bad, in our tally.

For the floor votes included in the tally, individual legislators are graded based on the percentage of times they voted with the ECRI position rather than against it. In the Senate this session, we counted 18 priority issue votes, and in the House we counted 19 priority issue votes. Any legislator who missed nine or more of these votes was not graded due to insufficient information to measure their commitment to environmental issues.

Principal sponsorship of environmental bills earns an additional +3 points (good for the environment and passed), +2 (good for the environment but did not pass), -3 (bad for the environment and passed), -2 (bad for the environment but did not pass). Principal sponsorship of environmental resolutions earns +1 (good for the environment) and -1 (bad for the environment). An additional point is added to the scale if the bill or resolution sponsored relates to an ECRI priority.

We recognize that leadership in both the House and Senate plays a role far beyond their individual votes in setting the tone for and against environmental protection. Although leadership control cannot be as objectively measured as the votes, it is useful to remember that leadership should be held responsible for the overall tone of the session on environmental matters.



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

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# General Assembly Missed Opportunities for Environmental Protection

Despite the laudable list of accomplishments, the General Assembly also passed several anti-environmental bills and missed several opportunities to fund key environmental programs and pass additional legislation.

The Environment Council is disappointed that a bill which specifies the amount of water Kent County Water Authority must supply to Amgen passed (**Alves**). While Amgen does need water for its processes, the bill sets a dangerous precedent of passing legislation to guarantee a specific corporation a specific amount of water. This approach does not promote a sustainable water use policy.

The Environment Council was also disappointed that the Senate passed legislation allowing out-of-state medical waste to be dumped in Rhode Island's Central Landfill (**Badeau**). This bill raised concerns over public health, landfill capacity, and the prospect of adopting legislation that blatantly violates planning documents adopted by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation.

In addition, despite vehement objections from the Environment Council and several Senate champions, legislation was passed that would have allowed development in the Big River Management Area (**Raptakis**). This legislation would have set a dangerous precedent of allowing development on land that the Department of Environmental Management is currently managing as open space.

The General Assembly failed to pass legislation bringing the Narragansett Bay Commission and the Coastal Resources Management Council into compliance with the Separation of Powers amendment. Instead, an ill-advised effort to regionalize NBC was floated until the end of the session. Additionally, ECRI op-

posed a House Resolution asking the Rhode Island Supreme Court to find that legislators can continue to sit on the CRMC.

On funding and budget issues, the Environment Council was dismayed over continued budget cuts at the Department of Environmental Management and the House Finance Committee's decision to remove a \$25 million clean water bond from the FY 07 budget that would have funded clean water infrastructure upgrades. In addition, ECRI was displeased that after two years, needed bay monitoring programs have yet to receive adequate funding.

The General Assembly also missed several opportunities to pass legislation that was important to the Environment Council. Notably, legislation that would have phased out high risk cesspools and the danger they pose to public health and our waterways failed to get a vote in 2005 and was voted down on the House floor in 2006 (**Long, Gibbs**).

In addition, important legislation that would have set a state-wide goal to reduce diesel pollution had a good hearing, but failed to pass out of committee (**Ginaitt**).

We look forward to those issues being addressed in the next legislative session.



## ☒ Find Your Elected Officials

On the Secretary of State's website, you can check your voter registration, find your current elected officials, and view sample ballots for upcoming elections.

**Check out:**

**[www.sec.state.ri.us/vic/](http://www.sec.state.ri.us/vic/)**

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## Governor's Mixed Record

*Continued from page 2*

### Open Spaces

Gov. Carcieri's record on supporting land conservation is mixed. He did propose and advocate for the 2004 Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond, which allocated \$70 million – including \$25 million for DEM acquisition and local matching grants, and \$18 million for recreation development.

However, in 2005 the governor supported legislation to use state open space land for development of a state police headquarters facility in the **Big River Management Area**. The land was originally acquired with bond funding to protect the area's drinking water supply and designated by the General Assembly as "open space." This legislation would have set a dangerous precedent of allowing the use of open space land for development and would have undermined public confidence in state land conservation programs.

In 2006, the Department of Administration opposed legislation that would prevent the misuse of protected open space land. The bill created a public process for reviewing any proposed change to state-owned open space land, such as state parks and management areas. Fortunately, the General Assembly passed the bill despite the Department of Administration's opposition, and it went into effect without the governor's signature.

### Climate Change, Energy, and Transportation

While the governor has issued Executive Orders to require new state fleets and buildings to be more energy efficient and has adopted new pollution standards for cars and trucks, he has yet to offer any real plan to reduce global warming pollution from power plants. Gov. Carcieri has refused to join the eight other Northeastern states that have signed on to the **Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative**. Unfor-

tunately, Rhode Island is now the only northeast state without a clear plan to tackle the issue of global warming pollution from power plants. In addition, Rhode Island is not on track to hit its short or medium term targets to reduce global warming pollution.

Gov. Carcieri signed the **Comprehensive Energy Conservation, Efficiency and Affordability Act of 2006**, which makes it easier to build renewable energy projects, establishes an Office of Energy Resources, and directs the state to consider energy efficiency and other long-term costs and savings when purchasing energy. The governor has also proposed a plan to obtain 15% of Rhode Island's electricity from native wind power.

Only months after the **Renewable Energy Fund Advisory Board** revised its strategic plan to promote renewable energy projects in support of the Renewable Energy Standard, Gov. Carcieri's policy staff created a "steering committee" that was positioned above the Advisory Board and had veto power over its recommendations. As a result of this, many board members felt that the integrity of the Advisory Board had been compromised and opted to withdraw from the process.

Gov. Carcieri has approved the expansion of the **MBTA commuter rail line** to T.F. Green Airport and Wickford Junction, which would make it easier for citizens in Kent and Washington Counties to commute by rail to Providence and Boston. Although the governor has approved funds to maintain the operating costs of **RIPTA**, his proposed budgets have also included detrimental cuts for the bus system. After nearly four years in office, the governor has ignored the advice of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council to create a long-term transit plan for the state, including establishing an umbrella agency to form and oversee a seamless public transit system.

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