

An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government - Climate Change

S2952 Sub A

Sponsors: Senators Conley, Sosnowski, Cool Rumsey, Goldin, and Archambault

Purpose of this bill: It seeks to protect the people of Rhode Island and make our state economy and society resilient in the face of the nearly certain, but not precisely predictable, effects of climate change. It provides the framework for state government to ensure that RI is a leader in developing and implementing strategies that address the challenges of climate change.



Institutional Design

- Establishes within the executive branch an executive climate change coordinating council comprised of officials from state agencies including but not limited to the director of RIDEM, CRMC, DOT, DOH, RIEMA, OER, Division of Planning, and the RI Commerce Corporation to assess, integrate, and coordinate climate change efforts throughout state agencies to reduce emissions, strengthen the resilience of communities, and prepare for the effects of climate change;
- Establishes an advisory board with thirteen members to advise the council on all matters pertaining to the duties and powers of the council and to serve as a conduit for communicating information from the council to communities and constituencies;
- Creates a science and technical advisory board with nine members to keep the executive climate change council abreast of important developments in scientific and technical information relating to climate change and resiliency;

Adaptation

- The council will conduct vulnerability assessments throughout the state, advance the state's understanding of how to adapt to the effects of climate change, and identify and communicate adaptation strategies to Rhode Islanders;
- The council will work with municipalities to support the development of sustainable and resilient communities;
- The bill ensures that the government identifies and facilitates opportunities to educate the public about climate change and state efforts to address it;

Mitigation

- The council will submit to the Governor and General Assembly a plan that includes strategies, programs and actions to meet targets for greenhouse gas reductions as follows: (i) Ten percent (10%) below 1990 levels by 2020; (ii) Forty-five percent (45%) below 1990 levels by 2035; (iii) Eighty percent (80%) below 1990 levels by 2050;
- The plan by the council will also include procedures and metrics for periodic measurement, not less frequently than once every five years;
- The bill ensures that state agencies incorporate climate preparedness in their planning, develop short and long term greenhouse gas emissions reductions plans, and support efforts to expand RI's green economy and infrastructure.