

## DRAFT 2020 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

R.I.G.L. § 42-140.1-5 requires that the EERMC “(s)ubmit to the joint committee on energy an annual report... regarding the activities of the Council, its assessment of energy issues, the status of system reliability, energy efficiency and conservation procurement, and its recommendations regarding any improvements which might be necessary or desirable.” The EERMC submits the following recommendations that will support energy and utility cost reductions for Ocean State residents and businesses; support industry and employment across the state’s clean energy sector; and further Rhode Island’s position as a national leader in energy efficiency and resource conservation.

1. **EXTEND LEAST-COST PROCUREMENT LAW:** The EERMC strongly recommends that the General Assembly extend Rhode Island’s Least Cost Procurement law (§ 39-1-27.7) for electric, delivered fuels, and gas customers by passing legislation that perpetuates, facilitates, and enhances implementation of the law for years to come. Currently the law is set to expire in 2024.

This law is foundational to all of Rhode Island’s clean energy and greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. It supports the least-cost means of reducing ratepayer energy bills and carbon. These programs also employ the majority of clean energy works in Rhode Island – six out of every ten sector jobs (pre-COVID) were derived from these activities.

2. **CONCENTRATE SUPPORT ON CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** If Rhode Island is to achieve its economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions targets, it will require a well-trained workforce to install robust energy efficiency measures and modernize heating and transportation equipment. In particular, the energy efficiency workforce will be rapidly changing in the coming years and requires a retooling of existing skillsets. Therefore, current efforts by the RI Department of Labor & Training and the Governor’s Workforce Board should be ramped to accommodate this work and coordinate with existing clean energy programs wherever possible. This is particularly true for historically-marginalized communities which may offer unique opportunities to train new workers in fields ripe for employment growth.

3. **ENSURE/EXPAND ENERGY PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY:** Rhode Island energy efficiency programs should constantly work to ensure that all customers and segments of the market have access to the benefits of energy efficiency savings. There should be a concerted effort to reach those who have been historically marginalized, are economically vulnerable, and/or those who are currently above poverty guidelines but need significant assistance to make efficiency investments. Coordination among all utility, state and federal income-eligible offerings/programs should be optimized to enhance the customer experience, increase program efficiency, and to strive for widespread program participation.

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4. **ADOPT APPLIANCE EFFICIENCY STANDARDS:** Rhode Island should adopt comprehensive appliance efficiency standards that also backstop existing federal appliance standards that may languish. Such action would achieve large energy and cost savings for Rhode Islanders.

Appliance efficiency standards set achievable energy and water use limits for appliances sold in Rhode Island. Rhode Island has not updated its appliance standards legislation since 2006. As other nearby states update their appliance standards, we potentially expose Rhode Islanders to less efficient products that are more expensive to operate. Timely appliance standards updates are an important means of reducing utility bills as well as energy and water waste.

5. **COORDINATE ACROSS ENERGY PROGRAMS & POLICIES:** A concerted effort should be made to coordinate energy efficiency programs with renewable energy deployment, grid modernization, heating sector transformation, state health initiatives, resiliency efforts, and any other relevant state and federal programs that promote well-being and energy security and affordability for all Rhode Islanders.

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6. **SHARE BUILDING ENERGY INFORMATION WITH RENTERS & NEW HOMEOWNERS:** Aggregated or asset-based building energy information should be shared with prospective buyers/renters when a

building is put up for sale or lease. This would allow greater transparency in Rhode Island building transactions, would spur the market for more energy efficient homes, and would provide a level of customer protection not currently available to home buyers and renters. Legislation to require the generation of building energy labels and their disclosure at time of listing is necessary to ensure comparability between buildings. States such as New York and Hawaii provide home energy information during building transactions as a means of protecting consumers from potentially unseen utility costs.

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