



2023 Council Annual Report Development Update

Consultant Team Presentation

March 21, 2024

Outline



Annual Report Requirements

Annual Report Sections

Annual Report First Draft

Council Policy Recommendations

Timeline & Next Steps

Council Discussion

Annual Report Requirements



The Powers and Duties section of the Council's enabling legislation requires the Council to:

“Submit to the joint committee on energy an annual report on/or before April 15 of each year, commencing in 2008, regarding

- The activities of the council,*
- Its assessment of energy issues,*
- The status of system reliability, energy efficiency and conservation procurement, and*
- Recommendations regarding any improvements which might be necessary or desirable”*

Annual Report Sections



- Executive Summary
- Letters from the Chair & Executive Director
- About the Council
- 2023 Achievements & Highlights
- 2024 Policy Recommendations
- Council Priorities for 2025 Plans
- 2023 Programs & Initiatives
- Council Public Education Efforts
- Planning Initiatives
- 2024 EE Plan Highlights
- Appendices

Annual Report First Draft



- First draft is in Word Doc form – working draft
- Rhode Island Energy, OER and C-Team actively working on updating content
- Pending final 2023 results from Rhode Island Energy
- Councilors should consider whether to update existing policy recommendations and/or include new recommendations

Council Policy Recommendations



2023 Policy Recommendations:

1. Fully leverage energy efficiency to meet **Act on Climate** mandates
2. Support **workforce development** for clean energy and energy efficiency
3. Make energy efficiency programs more **accessible and equitable**
4. Embed **equity** in energy programs
5. Coordinate and supplement efficiency programming with **federal funding**
6. Identify and maximize opportunities for weatherization and addressing **pre-weatherization barriers**
7. Align programming with federal **Justice40** equity guidelines
8. Evaluate the state's **energy future**

Additional detail in Appendix!

EERMC Annual Report: Timeline



March 21 – Council Meeting: First draft development overview

March 29 – Content for First Draft due

April 11 – Distribute First Draft for Council review

April 15 – Official due date

April 18 – Council Meeting: Review First Draft

May 6 – Final numbers due from Rhode Island Energy

May 9 – Distribute Final Draft for Council review

May 16 – Council Meeting: Vote on Final Report

Council Member Discussion





APPENDIX

1: Fully Leverage Energy Efficiency to Meet Act on Climate Mandates



Energy Efficiency is a key, foundational strategy to achieving the Act on Climate mandates and every effort must be made to coordinate the delivery and expand the programming of our energy efficiency portfolio. The EERMC should be integrated with Act on Climate initiatives to help achieve these Act on Climate mandates.

2: Support Workforce Development for Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency



A well-trained workforce to install robust energy efficiency measures and modernize heating and transportation equipment will be necessary to achieve the statewide decarbonization goals. Therefore, current efforts by the RI Department of Labor & Training, the Governor's Workforce Board, and others should be ramped up and focused on training for this work. Where possible, federal funding should be pursued in coordination with existing clean energy programs. Historically marginalized communities may offer unique opportunities to both train new workers in fields ripe for employment growth and also to better serve these marginalized communities moving forward. Supporting businesses in disadvantaged communities can create virtuous cycles as these businesses provide services to their neighbors and colleagues.

3: Make Energy Efficiency Programs More Accessible and Equitable



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 are economically vulnerable and those who are currently above poverty guidelines but need significant assistance to make efficiency investments. Specifically, continued focus and resources should be placed on implementing strategies and providing new and different customer support mechanisms to realize increased participation in energy efficiency offerings from the Income Eligible and Multifamily sectors. Efficiency improvements in these sectors can have significant impacts on household living expenses and improve quality of life for Rhode Islanders. Increased engagement with the commercial and industrial sector will also help drive emissions and energy reductions in the state.

4: Embed Equity in Energy Programs



Emphasizing and embedding equity considerations in the design and delivery of all state energy programs is critical to ensuring that all Rhode Islanders receive the maximum possible benefits. Barriers to equitable participation in energy programs must be examined and addressed as priorities. Such barriers, as well as recommendations, are identified in the RI Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group's 2021 Report and the RI Nonparticipant Market Barriers Study. Particular attention should be paid towards programs that serve under-represented and disenfranchised communities, such as the income-eligible and multifamily energy efficiency programs. Efforts to incorporate the voices and experiences of those most impacted by energy system inequities must continue to be supported and integrated into decision making in order to achieve equitable Outcomes.

5: Coordinate and Supplement Efficiency Programming With Federal Funding



The passing of the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act has resulted in once-in-a-generation investment in energy efficiency, decarbonization, and workforce development. These funding opportunities should be maximized for Rhode Islanders to provide a significant boost to the clean energy economy and expand upon the existing programming in the state.

6: Identify and Maximize Opportunities for Weatherization and Addressing Pre-Weatherization Barriers



Weatherization, including improving insulation and air sealing, is an essential component for improving energy efficiency in Rhode Island. Weatherization reduces burden on the energy grid, improves the comfort of homes and buildings for occupants, and saves money for residents and building owners. Pre-weatherization barriers such as health and safety concerns, including asbestos, vermiculite, and knob-and-tube wiring, can all prevent weatherization projects from moving forward. These issues are particularly prominent in Rhode Island, which has one of the oldest housing stocks in the nation. Identifying funding and supporting a workforce to address these barriers will be essential for weatherizing homes and buildings in Rhode Island and to help decarbonize the building sector.

7: Align Programming with Federal Justice40 Equity Guidelines



President Biden's Executive Order 14008 set a goal that a minimum of 40% of the overall benefits of federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities overburdened by pollution. Aligning state energy programming with this goal can provide a framework for ensuring that disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities are able to access and benefit from state energy programs.

8: Evaluate the State's Energy Future



At the writing of this report, the Public Utilities Commission is hosting a conversation among key stakeholders to explore the future of the natural gas distribution system. The EERMC looks forward to reviewing the results of this analysis. The Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council is also developing plans for decarbonizing the statewide economy by 2050. These economywide analyses will be critical for guiding the future of the energy systems in Rhode Island. Evaluation and alignment of the delivered fuels sector will also be essential for achieving the mandates of the 2021 Act on Climate.