



### TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

The Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group met in August to discuss sector specific progress and the 2026 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan.

Read more on page 3.

### EC4 UPDATE

The full EC4 and its advisory boards convened multiple times to discuss the ongoing climate action strategy development and the EC4's 2026 Spending Plan.

Read more on page 4.

### EQUITY WORKING GROUP

The Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (EWG) met to discuss community outreach and education, marketing strategies, and workforce development.

Read more on page 5.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**GECA** [Harvest Your Energy Fest](#) - Oct 18

**NEEP** [Heating Electrification Workshop](#) - Oct 20-22

**Climate Beacon 2025** [Climate Solutions Conference](#) - Oct. 22-24

**EC4** [Fall Climate Action Strategy Engagement: Pathways to Decarbonization](#) - 10/31

## MEETINGS COVERED

EE EWG - 8/25

EC4 STAB - 8/26 & 10/1

EE TWG - 8/28 & 9/29

EC4 Full Council - 9/15

EC4 Advisory Board - 9/24

Special Committee for Home Repairs - 9/23 & 10/6

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### TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

## No ship? New York offshore wind project faces more hurdles

New York's Empire Wind project has run into yet another obstacle after losing access to the specialized ship required to install its massive offshore wind turbines. The contract for the nearly completed vessel was abruptly canceled following disputes between shipbuilder Seatrium and its contractor, Maersk. The 810-megawatt wind farm, developed by Equinor, is located about 20 miles off Long Island and is expected to provide clean electricity to roughly 500,000 homes once operational.

Without the vessel, however, the project faces potential construction delays and added costs. Equinor is now evaluating alternative options, including the possible use of the Charybdis, the first U.S.-built wind turbine installation vessel, once it completes other commitments. The loss of this ship highlights the broader challenges facing the U.S. offshore wind industry—namely, a shortage of suitable vessels, supply chain constraints, and the fragile economics of large-scale renewable projects. Despite setbacks ranging from permitting issues to rising costs, state officials and developers remain hopeful that Empire Wind can still play a key role in advancing New York's ambitious clean energy goals.

## SPOTLIGHT

### NEW ENGLAND'S LAST COAL POWER PLANT SHUTS DOWN AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

In a significant turn for the region's energy landscape, New England's final coal-fired power plant, Merrimack Station in New Hampshire, has officially shut down more than three years ahead of its planned retirement. Once a 438-megawatt baseload facility in operation since the 1960s, it had dwindled in usage—producing only about 0.22% of New England's electricity in 2024. The shutdown reflects broader market realities: coal has been undercut by cheaper, cleaner alternatives such as natural gas and solar. Merrimack's owner, Granite Shore Power, had earlier committed to retire coal operations by 2028 as part of a legal settlement over Clean Water Act violations. Looking ahead, the site's former coal footprint is expected to be redeveloped into a clean energy hub, possibly featuring a combined solar and battery storage system, making use of the existing grid infrastructure. Advocates say the closure is emblematic of the energy transition underway in New England, and they see it as proof that coal's decline in certain markets is not just policy-driven, but fundamentally economic.

### Policy and Regulatory Updates

## Maine Partners with Connecticut to Fast-Track Clean Energy

Maine is teaming up with Connecticut to jointly procure new solar and wind energy projects as they race to capture expiring federal clean-energy tax incentives. The Maine Public Utilities Commission has ordered staff to evaluate Connecticut's procurement proposals, with any new developments needing to demonstrate direct benefits for Maine electricity customers.

Connecticut recently issued a request for proposals targeting "late stage" clean energy projects that can meet upcoming federal deadlines. By pooling demand and sharing information across states, both aim to strengthen project economics, improve scale, and lower costs for ratepayers.

Maine, which has pursued its own fast-track energy procurement efforts this year, had already selected five projects totaling over 250 MW for contracts. Officials underscore that collaboration across New England could be a path toward more cost-effective, reliable, and timely clean power deployment before federal tax credits phase down.

# WHOLE HOME REPAIRS SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION MEETING



EEC  
NEWSLETTER

RHODE  
ISLAND  
OCTOBER 2025

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Technical Working Group

During the Q2 2025 Technical Working Group meeting, Rhode Island Energy reported mixed progress across sectors due to lofty goals, rising costs, and multifamily market saturation. Industrial and Energy program performance was down, with efforts underway to boost heat pump installations through quarterly CAP agency targets. Commercial and Industrial savings were constrained by higher baselines, while Residential programs continued outreach to landlords and multifamily markets to identify cost-effective projects. Discussion of the second draft 2026 Plan focused on updates to the Performance Incentive Mechanism drivers, with adjustments to Electric and Gas measures and reallocation of oil weatherization audits to gas. Program updates highlighted new emphasis on heat pump water heaters, lead abatement coordination, and language access initiatives to improve program equity. The group also explored leveraging Advanced Metering Functionality (AMF) data to enhance future program design, though cost-effectiveness and data robustness remain challenges. Feedback on the second draft emphasized concerns about job impacts from budget reductions, transparency in performance reporting, and the potential to use AMF data to identify faulty equipment. Rhode Island Energy expressed commitment to maintaining affordability for ratepayers while continuing to refine data-driven approaches to support energy efficiency goals.

The inaugural Whole Home Repairs Special Legislative Commission meeting began with the introduction of Bill 6427 and the election of Representative Art Handy as chair. Chair Handy referenced Pennsylvania's Whole Homes Repair Program, suggesting a similar model for Rhode Island that would focus on energy efficiency upgrades, especially for elderly homeowners, to preserve housing stock. **The commission aims to coordinate existing energy efficiency efforts, increase funding and capacity, and develop recommendations for a comprehensive whole home program.** Commission members were introduced, and discussions included the role of municipalities in identifying and assisting residents and future presentation topics like building decarbonization, lead abatement, energy efficiency programs, adaptive modification, financing, and more.

The special legislative commission met again on October 6 to hear presentations on existing whole home repair programs. Mike Tondra, the Director of Community Programs and Municipal Engagement at the Executive Office of Housing presented current initiatives and program design. **The discussion focused on the design of the statewide home repair program, including how "older adult" is defined.** Tondra noted that they generally follow US Department of Housing and Urban Development guidelines and prioritize outreach through senior centers. A commission member asked about the status of the State Fiscal Recovery Fund funded program, which Tondra confirmed is not currently

accepting new applications. **The commission also discussed challenges with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, where administrative capacity has declined since a key nonprofit dissolved, leading to reduced participation.** Chair Handy asked if another nonprofit could take over, and Tondra explained that while some have expanded, it's been difficult to fill the gap. **Next, Carrie Zaslow, the Executive Director of the Providence Revolving Fund, presented on their Neighborhood Loan Fund program including progress so far, eligibility screening, construction management, loan forgiveness, and program participation.** Zaslow explained that while insurance issues often drive homeowners to seek assistance, they are rarely referred directly by insurers—many have already lost coverage and are on forced insurance. Their organization helps restore insurability after repairs and can provide documentation to insurers during the process. Chair Handy asked about the typical customer experience, and Zaslow described a detailed intake and construction management process, including income qualification, site visits, bidding, loan closing, and post-repair homeowner education. A commission member inquired about funding availability, and Zaslow confirmed that no current funding portal is open. Another member asked about technology infrastructure, and a Providence Revolving Fund staff member described the technology that has been used to emphasize data privacy, noting that an expansion of the program would require maintaining current security standards. The special legislative commission is scheduled to meet again on October 27.

## EC4 UPDATE

- \$440K** Public Transit Authority VanPool Pilot
- \$231K** Dept. of Education School Infrastructure Readiness Initiative
- \$193K** URI Internships & Curriculum Development
- \$105K** PUC Clean Energy & Climate Policy Analyst
- \$100K** RI Commerce Energy Efficiency Grant Program
- \$100K** HHS Community of Practice on Climate & Health

The full EC4 convened on September 15. Chair Gray announced that the EPA rescinded the 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding, but RI and other states have rejected the notion and will continue to move ahead with climate change mitigation efforts. Chair Gray also announced that a stop work order was issued for Revolution Wind in August. OER announced that the Solar for All federal grant was terminated, but the multistate lawsuit for the NEVI program was successful. Additionally, Clean Heat RI was relaunched in July, and lawsuits regarding the Revolution Wind project are in progress. The RIDEM Department of Air Resources presented the results of the third RGGI Program Review. Under the current program design, certain GHG reduction projects are awarded offset allowances, but these will be eliminated in 2027. Additionally, the original carbon dioxide emissions cap was set to flatline around 70 million metric tons in 2027, but the policy update extends the cap reduction to just under 10 million metric tons in the late 2030s.

Next, the EC4 reviewed and approved the proposed [\\$1.5 million 2026 EC4 Spending Plan](#). The approved projects cover a variety of topics including resilience, energy efficiency, transportation, and decarbonization. Progress updates were provided on both the 2025 Climate Action Strategy and the 2025 Statewide Resilience Strategy. E3 will be sharing their draft results from the Climate Action

Strategy modeling and hosting additional public engagement sessions in the coming months. E3 will modify the draft report based off public and agency feedback, host a final public webinar, and then finalize the report by the end of the year. The Resilience Strategy proceedings have identified 73 actions based on existing studies, and a vulnerability assessment covering 21 asset types is underway. RIDEM announced that the Climate Dashboard is nearly finished and will be published imminently. The full EC4 will be meeting monthly for the remainder of the year.

**Advisory Board:**

The EC4 Advisory Board met on September 24. RIDEM introduced Tara Hoda, the new Natural and Working Lands policy fellow on the RIDEM climate team. Hoda will be participating in upcoming projects related to climate, conservation, and sustainable land management. As part of its 2026 spending plan, the EC4 approved \$85,000 for the Advisory Board to conduct public opinion testing, develop public outreach materials, and engage the RI arts community via the RI State Council on the Arts (RISCA) to aid with the implementation of the 2025 Climate Action Strategy. Advisory Board members emphasized the need for defined leadership roles, suggesting a coordinating committee and small project teams to manage inputs and report back regularly. It was proposed that the same team could oversee all three projects, or separate teams could be formed based on interest. One Advisory Board member highlighted the importance of visualizing how these projects align with state workplans and deliverables, particularly the Climate Action Strategy and the Resilience Plan. Another member noted that only the Climate Action Strategy falls directly under EC4's purview, while other efforts are managed by different agencies. Questions were raised about alignment with existing work by E3, and it was suggested that timelines and collaborations be bridged to build on local efforts. Communication clarity was identified as a priority, especially given the complexity of ongoing state processes. Due to a reduced budget allocation, adjustments were proposed, including maintaining the existing arts outreach allocation and scaling back on public opinion testing. Suggestions included narrowing the geographic scope, leveraging existing polling data, and possibly eliminating focus groups. The group also discussed procurement options and emphasized the importance of branding with a clear call to action, despite challenges in the climate context. Input was requested on which climate leaders to engage moving forward. Chief Resilience Officer Kim Koriath provided an update on the 2025 Statewide Resilience Strategy and

introduced the three regional resilience coordinators. So far, the key actions from the 2018 Resilience Strategy have been updated, the first draft of the asset vulnerability assessment has been completed, and the regional resilience coordinators have met and developed technical assistance packages for twenty-six municipalities. The technical assistance packages include community engagement, background research, grant writing, project management, and other services. The EC4 Advisory Board will meet again on October 29.

#### Science and Technical Advisory Board:

The EC4 Science and Technical Advisory Board (STAB) met on August 26. The STAB technical consultant, Dunsky, provided an update on the Climate Action Strategy technical review. Dunsky's ongoing efforts include identifying high-impact revisions and drafting a letter to the Senate Commission on the Act on Climate, and E3 is collaborating with RIDOT to review the transportation models. The STAB provided suggestions for the input memo, including industrial heating and carbon capture opportunities. Concerns were raised about building sector modeling, particularly the use of residential data across all buildings, lack of deep retrofit or net-zero construction considerations, and refrigerant leakage risks in heat pump solutions, prompting a call for policy follow-ups to mitigate and quantify refrigerant impacts. The STAB briefly discussed updates to the Resilient Rhoody planning process; the key themes among the feedback so far were prioritizing recommended actions, identifying emerging actions, and assigning accountability and authority.

The EC4 STAB met again on October 1 to discuss preliminary findings from the draft 2025 Climate Action Strategy modeling results. The STAB technical consultant, Dunsky, presented preliminary findings from the technical review of additional modeling methodology materials, preliminary findings from the technical review of the risk and vulnerability assessment, a process update on interagency workshops for specific decarbonization strategies, the consultant team workplan for the following months, and a report out on meetings attended on the STAB's behalf in September. The STAB reviewed technical aspects of the decarbonization strategy, focusing on air quality, carbon dioxide emissions, and equity considerations. While dioxide is not directly included in air quality metrics, its relevance to transportation was acknowledged. A STAB member clarified that modeling for the Priority Climate Action Plan had addressed this previously. The Low-Income analysis will link climate actions to health outcomes in low-income communities, and equity will be integrated throughout the report rather than isolated. Concerns were raised about affordability modeling limitations, particularly regarding electric vehicle adoption and biofuel supply assumptions. The group discussed the modeling's conservative estimates and gaps between climate science and modeling practices. In the resilience planning update, prioritization of assets was flagged as a key issue, with suggestions to rank all assets into tiers. Public commenters encouraged the EC4 to share public engagement meeting materials in advance to allow for meaningful discussion during the sessions.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY EQUITY WORKING GROUP

The Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group (EWG) met on August 25 to discuss community outreach and education, equitable marketing strategies, and equitable workforce development. An EWG member emphasized the importance of strengthening partnerships with local organizations to enhance community outreach and education, noting that focusing on municipalities has proven effective. There was broad support for developing a weatherization ambassador program and employing dedicated outreach workers, while also ensuring coordination among groups like the EEC and RIE to avoid the duplication of efforts. Members discussed the need for a centralized repository for outreach materials, though concerns were raised about hosting capacity and funding limitations. Suggestions included seeking grants to support outreach and energy efficiency events, though some members noted that existing grant structures rarely support long-term staffing. The conversation also touched on the need to proactively identify successful outreach strategies and report back with actionable recommendations for RIE. In terms of equitable workforce development, members stressed the importance of tracking metrics and contextualizing performance data across communities. While some saw potential in external funding, others expressed skepticism about its availability for full-time positions. Leveraging trusted community workers was proposed as a way to improve outreach and unlock new funding opportunities. Barriers to participation, particularly in low-income communities, were acknowledged, and members emphasized the need for more accessible programs. Finally, the group discussed the value of using contextualized metrics such as percentages, rather than nominal figures, to better understand and communicate equity outcomes.