



### TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

The Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group met in January to discuss the 2026 Plan Docket and transitioning to a three-year planning cycle. Read more on page 4.

### EQUITY WORKING GROUP

The Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group met in October and December to discuss equity in energy efficiency and housing. Read more on page 4.

### EC4 UPDATE

The full EC4 and its advisory boards met multiple times to discuss the Climate Action Strategy and other initiatives. Read more on page 5.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### Spotlight

ACEEE releases report highlighting the potential of energy efficiency and demand side management in offsetting forecasted load growth ..... 2

### Research highlights

Research shows strong uptake of clean energy and energy efficiency technologies in RI in recent years ..... 2

### Climate Action Strategy

The EC4 unanimously approved the final draft of the 2025 Climate Action Strategy this past December ..... 3

### Climate Change Dashboard

RIDEM announces the release of its Climate Change Dashboard ..... 6

### Special Legislative Commission

The Whole Home Repairs Special Legislative Commission continued to discuss the creation of a Whole Home Repairs program in RI ..... 7

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**EC4 Council Meeting** - 2/26

**NEEP Ready, Set, Scale Webinar** - 3/10

**New England Energy Roundtable** - 3/20

**EBC RI's Environmental & Energy Priorities Leadership Program** - 3/26

## MEETINGS COVERED

**EC4** - 10/23, 11/20, 12/19

**EC4 Advisory Board** - 10/29 & 12/3

**EC4 STAB** - 12/4

**RICAS Engagement Sessions** - 10/16, 10/31, 11/17

**EE EWG** - 10/27

**EE TWG** - 1/22

**Whole Home Repairs Committee** - 10/27, 11/18, 12/1



### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Thousands of Rhode Islanders are powering their lives with clean energy; report suggests how more can join them

Thousands of Rhode Islanders are integrating clean energy and energy efficient technologies into their daily lives, according to a new report from the Environment Rhode Island Research & Policy Center. The analysis showed widespread adoption across the state, including nearly 13,000 electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles, more than 17,000 households using rooftop solar, and over 1,100 grid-connected home battery systems. **The findings also show substantial momentum in energy-efficiency upgrades: in 2023 alone, 12,410 Rhode Islanders claimed the federal Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit**, underscoring strong public interest in reducing energy waste and improving household efficiency. The report recommends steps such as instant solar permitting and fair compensation for solar customers to further accelerate clean-energy adoption as federal incentives phase out, emphasizing that these efforts benefit both residents and the state's environmental future.

### SPOTLIGHT

**FASTER AND CHEAPER: DEMAND-SIDE SOLUTIONS FOR RAPID LOAD GROWTH**

A new ACEEE report explains how the United States can address rapidly increasing electricity demand by prioritizing energy efficiency and load flexibility. Surging demand comes from data centers, industrial expansion, and the electrification of buildings and transportation. **The report shows that these demand-side strategies are the lowest-cost options for reducing energy consumption and peak demand, with energy efficiency averaging about \$21 per megawatt hour and load flexibility costing less than \$40 per kilowatt year.** Many regions still rely on new gas generation to meet projected increases of 20 to 50 percent in electricity use and 19 to 35 percent in peak demand over the next decade, but ACEEE warns that utilities often overestimate future demand, which can lead to costly stranded assets. The report concludes that demand-side management should be the nation's primary strategy, noting that **energy efficiency alone could realistically lower electricity consumption by 8 percent and reduce peak demand by 70 gigawatts by 2040.** The authors urge policymakers, utilities, and regulators to move quickly to scale these solutions and protect ratepayers.

### **Should polluters pay for climate change impacts?**

#### **This RI bill could make it happen.**

A Rhode Island bill introduced by Rep. Jennifer Boylan and Sen. Linda Ujifusa would create a "Climate Superfund" that requires major oil, gas, and coal companies to pay for the state's climate-related damages. Supporters say fossil fuel producers should cover the costs of rising seas, stronger storms, heatwaves, and other impacts linked to their emissions rather than leaving Rhode Island taxpayers responsible. The state would calculate how much it has spent addressing climate impacts since 2000 and then seek payments from the companies responsible for most greenhouse gas emissions. Although advocates frame the measure as an issue of fairness, opponents such as utilities and industry groups argue that companies could pass the costs on to consumers, and they note that similar laws in other states have faced legal challenges. Advocates maintain that fossil fuel companies have profited while contributing to climate damage and should help pay for infrastructure upgrades and climate resilience efforts. The bill, S2024/ H7004, is currently in committee in both the House and Senate.



The full Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) met on December 19 to review and vote on the full draft of the [2025 Climate Action Strategy](#). There was substantial public comment at this meeting, and stakeholders were extremely vocal about the areas they felt the draft Climate Action Strategy was lacking in. Public commenters consistently noted that the Climate Action Strategy does not convey sufficient urgency or provide the clear, actionable detail necessary to meet the Act on Climate targets, particularly the 2040 and 2050 requirements. They asked for a more assertive plan that includes concrete policies, timelines, and funding strategies. Many urged explicit support for major measures such as a Clean Heat Standard and building performance standards, emphasizing that voluntary efforts and benchmarking alone will not drive the necessary emission reductions. Commenters also raised concerns about underinvestment, limited data transparency, and optimistic claims that the state is on track for 2030. Several participants expressed frustration with an abbreviated and poorly timed public process. Overall, they called for stronger coordination across state agencies, more robust workforce development planning, and clear accountability to ensure that Rhode Island can meet its climate obligations. The EC4 voted unanimously to approve the draft 2025 Climate Action Strategy to be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Following the approval, the project team and their consultants hosted an informational session to present the key outcomes of the 2025 Climate Action Strategy and next steps. The EC4 stated that the full, graphically designed Report would be released in early 2026, and engagement with the Governor and General Assembly on implementation options would begin in January. The EC4 stated that the public comment portal remains open, and stakeholder feedback will inform follow up discussions and the EC4's agenda for 2026.

## EC4 2025 CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGY KEY MODELING FINDINGS

1. Current state policies projected to meet 2030 targets, uncertainties remain
2. Many near-term options to stay on track for goals
3. Stakeholders calling for near term action to ensure 2030 goals are met
4. Meeting climate goals will shift the way RI uses energy
5. Societal benefits of GHG reduction projected to outweigh costs
6. Some decarbonization technologies may require support to be competitive
7. Climate action is projected to deliver health benefits
8. RI's clean energy economy will add thousands of new jobs
9. RI CAS can advance equity if barriers are considered and properly addressed

*Source: [Nov 20<sup>th</sup> EC4 Model Summary Presentation](#)*



The three Climate Action Strategy engagement sessions highlighted Rhode Island's ongoing work to meet Act on Climate mandates amid significant fiscal and institutional challenges. On October 16, stakeholders reviewed proposed near-term GHG reduction strategies across electricity, buildings, transportation, industry, waste, and natural and working lands, while repeatedly raising concerns about funding transparency, realistic modeling assumptions, and equitable distribution of costs and benefits. Breakout discussions emphasized prioritizing actions that are feasible, politically viable, and equitable, while identifying barriers such as climate denial, institutional resistance, corporate inertia, and community-specific transit limitations. The October 31 Pathways to Decarbonization webinar presented E3's economy-wide modeling, showing that Rhode Island is on track for its 2030 target but requires major expansion of EV adoption, heat pumps, and energy system transformation to meet 2040 and 2050 goals; participants urged clearer recommendations, early release of technical materials, and more accessible communication tools. Finally, the November 17 Workforce & the Green Economy session examined how climate action will reshape jobs, with findings showing a relatively strong labor base but significant gaps in priority trades, persistent equity disparities, and barriers related to training access, transportation, and workplace bias. Projected job growth—particularly in offshore wind, construction, and solar—prompted calls for targeted reskilling, better alignment between training programs and industry needs, support for workers transitioning from fossil fuel roles, and development of a centralized workforce “conciierge” system. Across all sessions, participants stressed centering equity, transparency, and community engagement in the state's final climate strategy.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY Technical Working Group

The Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group (TWG) met on January 22 to discuss the 2026 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan Docket Proceedings, and the transition from an annual energy efficiency planning cycle to a three-year timeline. The TWG discussed extending conversion incentives to customers who use appliance heating as their primary heating source, noting that these customers are facing both discomfort and high energy bills, so action is crucial. The Company confirmed that they are actively thinking about this but want to ensure that the proper guard rails are in place. Regarding the transition to a three-year plan, the TWG considered similar planning processes in regional states like Massachusetts and Connecticut and discussed updating benefit calculations to align with the most recent AESC values. Additionally, the TWG proposed conducting a less comprehensive version of a potential study as opposed to a full market potential study due to constrained time and resources with the transition to a three-year plan this year.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY EQUITY WORKING GROUP

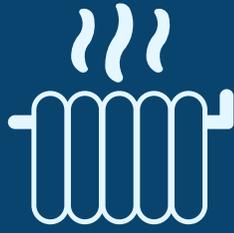
At the October 27 meeting of the Energy Efficiency Equity Working Group, participants received updates on efforts to center equity in energy efficiency and housing. URI Cooperative Extension's Efficient Housing for All Community of Practice (EHACOP) described how it elevates community voices and highlights the role of energy efficiency in reducing energy burden, improving air quality, and supporting health. Participants discussed the Weatherization Assistance Program, its deferral funding, and the importance of partnerships with community-based organizations. EHACOP emphasized that meaningful engagement requires significant resources and that program uptake remains low when structural barriers persist. Recommendations focused on systemic improvements, stronger community health worker networks, and integrating energy efficiency into health-oriented outreach. Rhode Island Energy outlined the Business Energy Efficiency Program and the 2026 Energy Efficiency Plan, which reduces the budget to \$95.8 million. The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) presented a new \$1.1 million RGGI-funded effort to address pre-weatherization barriers and support healthier, electrified homes, including clearing a backlog of more than 250 deferred units and assisting roughly 50 active low-income households.

The EWG met again on December 1 to hear presentations from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Community Outreach Coordinator and a weatherization program participant. Additionally, Rhode Island Energy provided updates about heat pump marketing efforts and the equity metrics visualization project. Finally, GHHI presented updates on the RGGI electrification initiative.



**37%**  
TRANSPORTATION

**20%**  
RESIDENTIAL  
BUILDINGS



**19%**  
ELECTRICITY  
CONSUMPTION

## EC4 UPDATE

The full Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) convened on October 23. Chair Gray provided opening remarks around the impacts of federal uncertainty, including changes in priorities and available grants and the added pressure on state agencies to pick up the slack. Progress updates were provided on the 2025 Climate Action Strategy and the 2025 Statewide Resilience strategy, with EC4 discussion focusing on the importance of clear action items that call out specific state agencies within both plans. RIDEM provided a climate justice update, reporting that the RIDEM resilience, climate, and Health Equity Zone teams held a kickoff meeting to build off of the momentum of the recently approved Climate Health Community of Practice and strategize departmental coordination. During agency updates, the Department of Health and Human Services stated that they were coordinating with the Department of

of Administration and the Governor's Office to obtain a \$1 billion grant for improving health access and investing in the health workforce, RIPTA announced that it kicked off a year-long [Drive Less Initiative](#), and OER announced the release of a new [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative \(RGGI\) dashboard](#). A participant provided public comment encouraging the EC4, as a group made up of many agency heads, to commit to the outcomes of the Climate Action Strategy and take action accordingly.

The full EC4 met again on November 20. E3 provided a detailed update on the 2025 Climate Action Strategy, including a summary of the feedback received during the fall engagement sessions and a summary of key findings from the modeling. The EC4 discussion focused on promoting heat pump adoption, noting that oil users (30% of the state) are easiest to convert, as seen in Maine's success. Additionally, the EC4 discussed reliance on external factors such as the Renewable Energy Standard and heat pump production, noting that the heat pump manufacturing industry is strong, innovative, and should keep pace with increased adoption. The EC4 also discussed the role of the social cost of carbon in rulemaking and impacts to its value at the federal level. Chief Resilience Officer Koriath shared updates on the Statewide Resilience Strategy and announced that the full draft would be available for a three-week public comment period in January. During agency updates, EC4 members announced two grants, including a grant for net-zero and all electric school construction, and a second to replace aging RIPTA diesel buses with hybrid and electric buses. Advisory Board member Timmons Roberts shared an update from [COP30](#), stating that the international consensus was to move ahead on climate action without significant participation from the US, and a [special initiative](#) was established to discuss how to combat disinformation that undermines the scientific understanding of climate change causes and mitigation efforts. Finally, RIDEM announced the release of the [2023 Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#).

**Advisory Board:** The EC4 Advisory Board met on October 29 to discuss the EC4 Budget allocation for their Climate Conversations proposal. The Advisory Board discussed the potential need to develop an RFP for public opinion and message testing, noting that using an existing marketing, communications, and media planning MPA could save time and funding given the constrained budget. An Advisory Board member emphasized defining clear messaging goals, target demographics, and connection outreach to communities that are already engaged in similar work. The Advisory Board suggested focusing on RI-specific outcomes from the Climate Action Strategy and the Resilience Strategy while addressing status quo bias by establishing the perception that clean energy is local and reliable. The Advisory Board decided to review the Nature Conservancy's polling experience as

a starting point. RIDEM shared climate justice updates, including a potential partnership with Roots2Empower to host intercommunity conversations regarding the ongoing planning cycles.



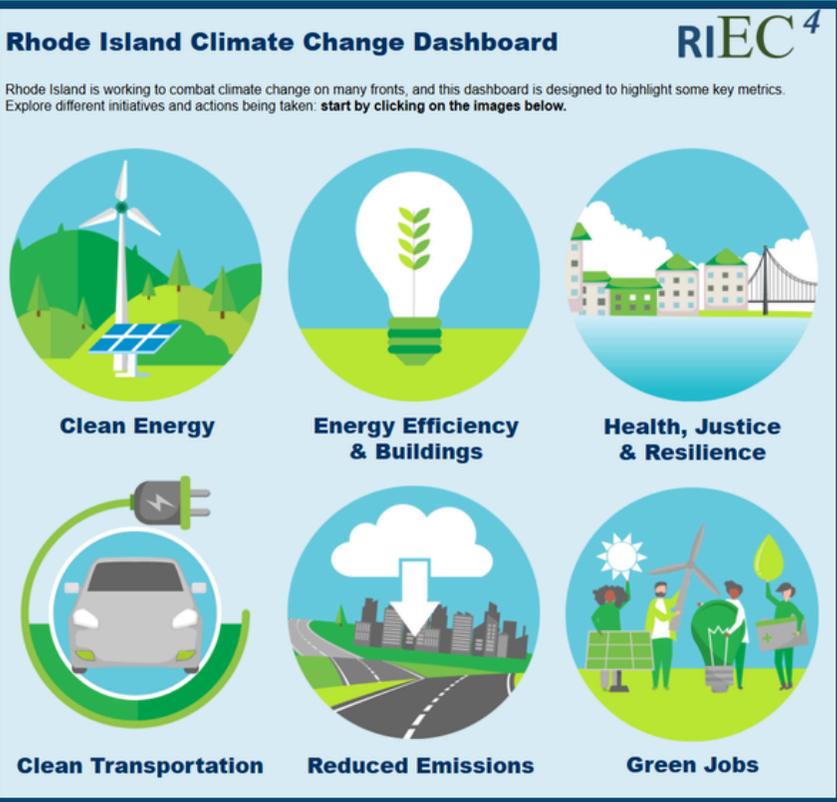
The EC4 Advisory Board convened again on December 3 to continue discussions on their Climate Conversations initiative as well as the Advisory Board letter and recommendations for the Climate Action Strategy. The Advisory Board emphasized the need for strong message development and testing, polling, and focus groups to determine strategies that will inspire action. Initial brainstorming highlighted the importance of relatable local messaging, inspiring hope rather than discouragement, and building support for the strategies established in the Climate Action Strategy. The Advisory Board also discussed how polling could be used to establish willingness to pay and preference for different strategies. The Advisory Board’s discussion on its letter and recommendations for the Climate Action Strategy highlighted that states like Rhode Island must lead by example, and successful implementation will require ongoing focus and strong political commitment. Additionally, while net societal benefits are strong, costs are high as well, so clear communication that the benefits outweigh the costs will be essential to the success of the Climate Action Strategy.

**Science & Technical Advisory Board:**

The EC4 Science and Technical Advisory Board (STAB) met on December 4 to discuss its memo on the 2025 Climate Action Strategy. The STAB technical consultant, Dunsky, presented a report out on the meetings and webinars attended on the STAB’s behalf throughout the fall, a synopsis of the Climate Action Strategy Executive Summary, and a review of the draft STAB Comment Memo for the Climate Action Strategy. The STAB emphasized a need for clear, direct language in their Comment Memo, particularly regarding gaps in the modeling that resulted in missed opportunities to explore additional strategies. Conditional on the inclusion of the notes provided during the meeting, the STAB voted unanimously to endorse the Draft STAB Comment Memo to be included in the final 2025 Climate Action Strategy Report.

# RHODE ISLAND

## Climate Change Dashboard



The [RIDEM Climate Change Dashboard](#) was designed to be a living tool that will be updated every six months, though some data, such as the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, is only available annually. The dashboard currently includes six main sections focusing on clean energy, energy efficiency and buildings, health, justice, and resilience, clean transportation, reduced emissions, and green jobs—with potential additions such as a dedicated RGGI section. Feedback on the dashboard included improving clarity and usability, such as adding fuel type details, linking to reports, normalizing benefits data, and including a glossary. Suggestions also included tracking greenspace loss, active mobility infrastructure, electric vehicle adoption trends, and disaggregating state fleet data. Stakeholders emphasized aligning the dashboard with Climate Action Strategy goals, clarifying procurement versus built capacity for energy projects, and making metrics like elective vehicle growth and charging station types more visible. The dashboard is intended to serve advocates, legislators, students, and the public by consolidating key climate and energy data in one accessible location.

# WHOLE HOME REPAIRS SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION



**EEC**  
NEWSLETTER

**RHODE  
ISLAND**  
FEBRUARY 2026

At the October 27, 2025 meeting of the Rhode Island Whole Home Repairs Special Legislative Commission, members received presentations on how existing energy efficiency and home repair programs intersect with whole-home needs for low- and moderate-income residents. Steven Chybowski from the Office of Energy Resources began with an overview of Rhode Island's Least-Cost Procurement (LCP) framework and current residential incentives for weatherization, efficient appliances, and gas and electric heating and water-heating measures, noting that LCP is authorized through the end of 2027. He highlighted the Clean Heat Rhode Island (CHRI) program, originally launched in September 2023 with \$25 million in federal ARPA funds and relaunched in July 2025 with \$10 million in RGGI funding and a sharper focus on low- and moderate-income households, while also explaining limitations of the HEAR rebate program and clarifying that RGGI funds intentionally target fuel-heated homes (natural gas or delivered fuels) to avoid overlap with utility-run electric programs. In the second presentation, Sherry Diaz of Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP) reviewed a wide suite of energy and repair programs; LIHEAP, Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), Good Neighbor Energy Fund, heating system repair/replacement, appliance rebates, and multiple home repair funding sources such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), USDA Section 504, and partnerships with GHHI, Habitat for Humanity, and the Providence Revolving Fund. She emphasized that CCAP routinely "braids" funding streams on almost every project to maximize efficiency and impact. During discussion, commissioners probed how well programs coordinate, whether staff can follow clients across programs, and how information is shared; CCAP uses a model where auditors focus on energy efficiency but screen for social determinants of health and refer to other resources when funding allows, while trying to avoid "dead referrals." The conversation also touched on making it easier for agencies to deliver resources without signaling that funding is unnecessary and included clarification of Rhode Island Energy's A-60 low-income rate structure and a suggestion to explore expanding eligibility to include Low-Income Tax Credit properties (LITCP/Section 8) to better align utility rate design with housing and equity goals.

The special legislative committee convened again on November 18 to hear a presentation from GHHI President, Ruth Ann Norton, on the applications of GHHI's whole house model at the state and national levels. The commission inquired about the ages of the homes that GHHI works in. Norton responded that given the nature of the programs GHHI offers, they primarily work in older and disadvantaged communities. Norton added that GHHI completed a study in the years prior that found a significant link between the

Whole House program and foreclosure prevention. The commission discussed outreach strategies, and Norton described a partnership with the Providence CAP agency to address pre-weatherization barriers for customers that were deferred. Norton stated that GHHI works equally with rental units and homeowners, adding that landlords are more likely to participate because the program is grant-based, so there are no costs to landlords or tenants. When asked about recapture provisions, Norton stated that GHHI primarily works with low-income homeowners and aims to improve their property value and help build generational wealth. The commission raised concerns about rising property taxes as a result of home improvements, and Norton maintained that GHHI's priority is to lift up homeowners by increasing their property value. Additionally, the property owners are left with a more affordable structure in terms of maintenance and energy bill costs.

The special legislative committee met again on December 1 to discuss existing home repair programs in the state. Aubrey Collins of Church Community Housing (CCH) and Carrie Zazlow of the Providence Revolving Fund (PRF) provided presentations on their entities' home repair programs. The commission asked about lead remediation, and Collins replied that it is handled through partnerships, such as with Newport's CAP agency and RI Housing's federal grant. Collins said that the most common cases of late are septic system repairs in Portsmouth due to ordinance deadlines. When asked about areas of improvement, Collins suggested that emergency funds for urgent needs like boiler replacements would be helpful. Collins stated that the program often serves seniors and disabled individuals, assessing homes for code compliance and coordinating with other organizations when necessary. Concerns were raised about income qualification thresholds and discrepancies, as some homeowners qualify for affordable housing but not repair funds. Many seniors on fixed incomes face challenges despite owning assets. Regarding PRF's program, Zazlow announced that the intake portal was paused after reaching 1,500 applications to manage capacity. Zazlow noted that PRF was searching for additional funding to serve more applicants. The commission asked about waitlisted applicants from the first round, and Zazlow said that while those on the waitlist had to reapply, they were given advanced notice and instructions on how to do so when the portal reopened. The discussion also focused on utilizing multiple funding streams to minimize customer costs, and Zazlow replied that PRF plans to braid in funding sources such as the CDBG program. Zazlow reported that the intake data showed that most applicants are older adults in small households who cannot access equity for repairs, making home repair funding critical. Zazlow noted that PRF is interested in supporting smaller projects to prevent minor issues from escalating, though outreach barriers remain.