EEC NEWSLETTER

RHODE ISLAND

NOV 2026

TECHNICAL WORKING GROUPS

Both the EE TWG and SRP TWG met to discuss the development of the 2027-2029 EE and SRP Plans #2.

EQUITY WORKING GROUP

The EWG discussed their EWG Report, alignment with the 2027-2029 EE Plan, and Community Based Navigation #3.

EC4

The EC4 approved their 2027 Spending Plan, provided updates on the Climate Science Report, discussed resiliency projects, and more #4-5.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

New England Energy Summit - December 1

URI Cooperative Extension Extension Fellows in the Community: A showcase event - December 2

New England Energy Roundtable The Utility Business Model & The Year in Energy - December 4

ACEEE 2027 Energy Efficiency Policy Forum - January 13

MEETINGS COVERED

EE TWG - 8/27

SRP TWG - 8/18

EE EWG - 8/17, 10/26

EC4 - 9/24

EC4 Advisory Board - 8/26, 9/30, 10/28

EC4 STAB - 10/1, 11/5

Issue 17, November 2026

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY COUNCIL

The Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Council (EEC) *is a group of stakeholders that serves all customers to ensure the utility is investing in the least expensive resource - energy efficiency.*

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System Reliability Procurement Technical Working Group

On August 18, the System Reliability Procurement Technical Working Group (SRP TWG) met to discuss three-year plan development. There has been no change to the SRP process and the ConnectedSolutions program will continue to reduce peak-related supply costs for the electric side. Rhode Island Energy also mentioned they are piloting research for gas segment decommissioning. Rhode Island Energy made iterative updates, streamlined sections where appropriate and uploaded relevant information. They also created a group mailbox, SRPInfo@rienergy.com, to better capture correspondence related to all things SRP. It is their intent to build upon the structure and success of their prior three-year plan while staying compliant with the Least Cost Procurement (LCP) standards. A presentation was also given on the ConnectedSolutions Investment Proposal and proposed program design changes for both the Residential and Small Business and Commercial and Industrial sectors. The SPR TWG encouraged stakeholder participation and feedback on the three year plan and the investment proposal.

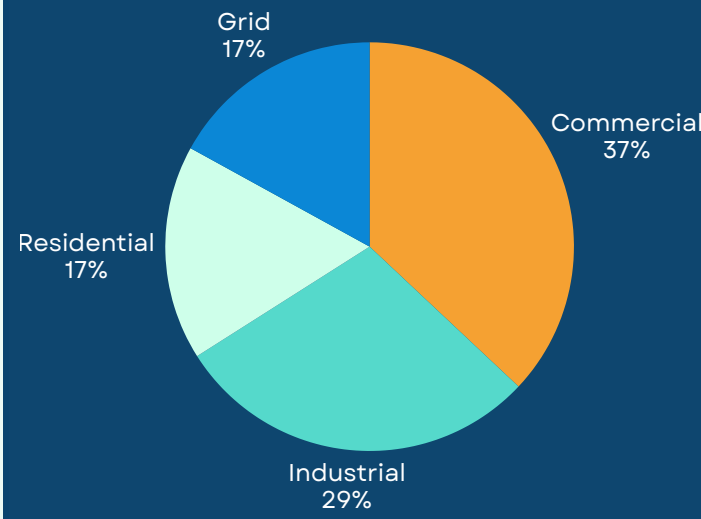
ENERGY EFFICIENCY Technical Working Group

On August 27, the Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group (EE TWG) reviewed the second draft of the 2027-2029 Energy Efficiency Plan. Key updates from the latest draft included affordability and cost effectiveness, equity topics like language access and housing-related barriers, AMF and behavior programs, opportunity studies, comparison of cost of efficiency to supply (CoCOES), outside funding coordination, mid-term modifications, customer listening and equity working group reports, and CHP. Key numbers of the plan were also discussed. The combined gas and electric budgets for 2027 is $95.2M, for 2028 $94.3M, and for 2029 $90.6M. Net lifetime savings from 2027-2029 is 17,223,000 MWh for electric and 61,435,000 MMBtu for gas. Final budgets, measure analyses, attachments and testimony, final savings values, cost-effectiveness, and evolving standards are still being refined into the plan.

SPOTLIGHT

Energy Efficiency Programs for Large Savings in the Next Decade

A new report published by ACEEE finds that expanding utility-funded energy efficiency programs could be one of the most cost-effective ways to meet growing energy demand over the next decade in the United States. The analysis identifies 13 high-impact program areas, including industrial efficiency, commercial building retrofits, HVAC upgrades, low-income home improvements, smart thermostats, and efficienct appliances. The report concludes that by 2035, expanded efficiency programs could reduce projected United States electricity consumption by 12% while also cutting natural gas, propane, and fuel oil use by 6%. According to the authors, energy efficincy can often be deployed faster and at a lower cost than building new generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure, helping to moderate future electricity rate increases while reducing peak demand and emissions.



Division of 2035 electricity savings (without fuel switching) by sector (ACEEE, 2026)

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On August 17, the Equity Working Group (EWG) reviewed feedback and recommendations received on the first draft of the EWG Report. Based on stakeholder feedback, GHHI stated the following were added into the report: "develop new metrics," language and a framework for Non-Energy Benefits (NEB), an exploration of Department of Energy's Training for Residential Energy Efficiency Contractors (TREC) program, and establishing similar referral pathways with Rhode Island Housing and other Housing Choice Voucher administrators statewide. RIE then presented on some of the equity strategies they will focus on in the 2027-2029 period. This included language access, pre-weatherization barriers, small businesses, workforce challenges, and landlords and renters. Lastly, GHHI provided an update on the Whole House and Electrification Pilot. 51 RGGI eligible units are underway or completed, 37 RGGI units have been sent back to CAPP, and 21 RGGI units have completed weatherization. The GHHI Rhode Island team has also performed its first electrification assessment for its first candidate, and it is proceeding to the next steps of the CHRI program.

During the October 26 EWG meeting, the group first heard an update on the RIE 2027-2029 Energy Efficiency Plan. Section 3.3 of the Plan entails the Equity Plan, and the Three-Year Plan also includes the final Equity Working Group Report. Plan hearings are currently scheduled to occur in mid-December. Overall, there were 24 EWG-recommended equity strategies that were also incorporated as core actions in the Plan, including equity metrics, language access, pre-weatherization barriers, small business outreach, weatherization workforce, and landlord recruitment. EWG members then had a discussion on active collaboration to advance equity. The group mentioned moving from issue identification and making recommendations to redefining and analyzing data as well as collaborating with RIE to actively address issues. Lastly, the EWG did a topic deep dive on Community Based Energy Navigation. The URI Cooperative Extension presented on the RI Energy Navigator Pilot where their focus right now is synthesizing material from ACEEE's technical assistance program and building momentum and consensus for Community Based Energy Navigator Training (C-BEN) through cross-sector key informant interviews. The goals for 2027 are to design and host a C-BEN specifically for Children's Friend staff, who serve Rhode Island's most vulnerable children and families. The meeting concluded with an announcement that a member priority survey for 2027 will be sent out and the next EWG meeting will be held on January 25, 2027.

DATA CENTERS AND ENERGY USAGE 101: IMPACTS ON THE ELCTRICAL GRID

Clean Energy Group Webinar



On September 1, Clean Energy Group held a webinar "Data Centers and Energy Usage 101: Impacts on the Electric Grid." Alli Finn, Director of Community Partnerships at AI Now Institute, presented to the group on "Understanding the Hyperscale Boom, Energy & Community Impacts, and What to Do About It." Finn presented the impacts of data centers including democratic processes, affordability, clean air, energy, and water, local budgets, and community futures. She also noted that data centers can negatively affect energy systems and communities by contributing to higher electricity bills, exacerbating affordability challenges, placing additional strain on the electric grid, slowing climate progress, and accelerating private equity ownership and vertical integration within the utility sector. Finn outlined several avenues for intervention, including engagement with local governments, particularly zoning boards, permitting bodies (air, water, land use), public utility commissions, state government, and courts. Policy and organizing resources were also made available to listeners such as the North Star Data Center Policy Toolkit, recorded trainings, and Sight Fight Guide for Communities. The audience then heard from Sarah Smith, a researcher in Lawrence Berkeley National Lab's Energy Analysis Division. Dr. Smith discussed the factors affecting data center electricity-use modeling, as well as key considerations for policymakers, regulators, and local authorities when evaluating projected data center load growth, drawing on findings from the U.S. Data Center Usage Report 2025 Update.

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PROJECTED EFFECTS OF THE BIPARTISAN AMERICAN AFFORDABILITY AND JOBS ACT ON THE POWER SECTOR

The Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (BAAJA) is a permitting and energy infrastructure package that would change federal environmental review and project approval processes. BAAJA was introduced to the United States Senate on September 30, 2026 by Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Mike Lee (R-UT), and Martin Heinrich (D-NM). Resources for the Future found that if BAAJA were to be signed into law, it could influence several key impacts, notably expanding the U.S. electrical grid. By 2042, the model projected overall transmission capacity to increase by 30% over the baseline. Second, the bill would decrease the average annual costs of the electricity system by 3.5-7.0% over the model period. Overall, BAAJA is estimated to save more than $350 billion through 2050 in net-present-value terms, decreasing national electricity prices. BAAJA could also support the deployment of additional new clean energy in the near term and displace other higher-emitting energy sources reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Resources for the Future projects that near-term power sector emissions reductions could reach 200 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. Overall, the modeling suggests that the transmission expansion supported by the BAAJA would enable deeper emissions reductions under future climate and clean energy policies.

On Friday, November 6, indigenous groups held a press conference urging senators to vote against the bill. Indigenous peoples fear BAAJA would weaken the federal government's legal obligation to consult tribes on certain projects that would affect them (The Guardian 2026). On Monday November 9, the Senate voted to open debate on BAAJA. Senators voted 73-25 on the cloture motion, which pushed the bill a step forward. Indigenous peoples, environmental organizations, and other opponents have spoken out against the bill because it would weaken environmental laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and speed up the construction of fossil-fuel infrastructure. The Senate is moving into an amendment and debate phase before holding a final vote on passing the bill.



Image Credit: Canary Media. Rhode Island Senator Sheldon Whitehose was one of four senators who introduced the BAAJA bill.

EC4 UPDATE

On September 24, the EC4 began with several key updates. The Green Bond, proposed by Gov. McKee for FY2028, will go before voters in November. The largest investment included in the Green Bond is dedicated to resiliency. OER then provided an update on its projects and programs. The Charge RI electric vehicle charging program, launched in June, has already completed 34 projects, and more than eight state and quasi-state agencies have applied to the Zero Emission Vehicle Fleet Program. Under the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program, 26 charging locations are currently in development. OER's Lead by Example team has launched an energy benchmarking tracker for state properties and public schools. In addition, two solar carport projects incorporating energy storage and electric vehicle charging will be installed on the Capitol campus within the next year. Installation of Revolution Wind is now complete and the project is preparing to begin full production in the coming weeks. OER also provided an update on the Solar for All grant. Although the grant, awarded in 2024, was later terminated at the federal level, OER is preparing for potential appeals by the Trump administration. The Home Energy Assistance and Retrofit (HEAR) program continues to support long-term energy improvements for Income Eligible households. OER has also launched the Homeowner Managing Energy Savings (HOMES) program, a $32 million program supporting Income Eligible multifamily heat pump installations. Rhode Island is the first state in New England to launch a HOMES program, and OER now has more than $90 million in active federal funding for energy efficiency and heat pumps. The EC4 then voted to approve the $1.5 million FY2027 Spending Plan. The meeting concluded with a presentation by Climate Jobs and Brown University on "Engineering a Just Transition: Institutions Matter," followed by a progress update from Rhode Island's Chief Resilience Officer.

EC4 STAB

At the EC4 STAB October 1 meeting, members discussed the approved FY2027 EC4 Spending Plan and updates on RI's 2024 GHG Inventory. The EC4 STAB's consultant team, Dunsky, then presented updates to the 2026 Climate Science Report. A draft of the report was distributed to the STAB on October 1, and members provided comments and feedback through October 15. Dunsky also presented on heat pump rates for Rhode Island customers. They explained that when natural gas prices are low, the "spark gap" (the ratio of retail electricity prices to gas prices) must be overcome for electrification to make economic sense for customers. Heat pumps have a high Coefficient of Performance (COP), defined as the ratio of useful energy moved to energy consumed, which helps mitigate this challenge; however, it often does not overcome the spark gap on its own. As a result, innovative rate structures are often considered alongside upfront incentives to encourage greater heat pump adoption. When a rate structure lowers the spark gap below the COP, heat pumps become economically attractive for customers. Other drivers of heat pump adoption include increased demand for cooling, savings relative to heating oil and electric resistance heating, rebates and financing programs, and evolving codes, regulations, and standards. The Conservation Law Foundation then discussed the Heat Pump Demand-Side Management (DSM) Investment Proposal. Rhode Island Energy has agreed to submit a DSM Investment Proposal to the PUC consistent with applicable Least Cost Procurement Standards, which will include a monetary benefit for heat pump customers. At or around the same time as the DSM filing, Rhode Island Energy also agreed to submit a study evaluating the extent to which differences in cost causation exist between heat pump customers and other customers. To reflect any such differences, the study will address the appropriateness of rate design and other ratemaking principles. The EEC will vote on whether to endorse the DSM proposal on November 19 before it is filed with the PUC on November 20.

On November 5, the STAB members had a working session regarding the draft of the Climate Science Report. With input from this session, the Climate Science Report will be revised and sent back out to STAB members for review. The final draft and a presentation to the STAB on the report will be delivered later in November. The final report will be made available to the public at the end of the month.

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EC4 ADVISORY BOARD

On August 26, the EC4 welcomed a new Council member, Teresa Crean, the City of Newport's Director of Resilience and Sustainability. The Advisory Board also provided updates on EC4-funded projects, metrics for success, and coordination among projects. This included an update on action tracking for Resilient Rhody 2025, with 10 metrics for success marked as completed, 76 metrics in progress, and 79 metrics not yet being tracked. This work will continue to be monitored on a quarterly basis. An update was also provided on the EC4 Spending Plan. The Council received 30 project proposals totaling $4 million. Public comment on these projects was accepted through September 3. Because the EC4 has only $1.5 million available, the Council discussed its ability to partially fund projects and the importance of prioritizing projects that cannot secure funding from other sources or that address critical gaps. The Advisory Board also clarified that if Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) funds are used for broad ratepayer credits, as proposed by Governor McKee, this would not reduce the $1.5 million available for EC4 project funding. Lastly, the Board discussed the PUC's recent decisions regarding Rhode Island Energy's rate increase request. The PUC denied Rhode Island Energy's proposal to increase its allowed return on equity from 9.3% to 10%, maintaining the current level. There will likely be modest increases in distribution charges, although these may be offset by bill credits ordered by the PUC. Another key decision was the phaseout of subsidies for new gas connections over a three-year period. The PUC also accepted a settlement between the Conservation Law Foundation and Rhode Island Energy that will require the utility to study the extent to which heat pump owners may be overpaying for electric service. Overall, the Board noted that the PUC's decisions are beneficial for ratepayers and will support Rhode Island's efforts to comply with the 2021 Act on Climate.

The EC4 Advisory Board opened its September 30 meeting with updates on EC4 actions. The Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience Fund Grants (OSCAR), jointly administered by the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, RIDEM, and the RI CRMC, are accepting applications through December 11. The program provides financial assistance in the form of grants for adaptation and resilience projects that protect coastal and riverine habitats. The Advisory Board also shared that Providing Resilience Education for Planning in Rhode Island (PREP-RI), an educational initiative developed by Rhode Island Sea Grant, has relaunched course modules on its website covering liability, flooding, stormwater, climate, infrastructure, adaptation, and mapping. The EC4-funded RISCA Arts and Climate Grant is also accepting applications through November 2 and supports arts and culture projects that translate complex climate information into accessible and resonant visuals, stories, and experiences. The Advisory Board then discussed the EC4 FY2027 Approved Spending Plan. Lastly, an announcement was made regarding the Providence Climate Justice Plan five-year update. Targeted outreach efforts are currently underway, and the next community-wide meeting will be held on December 3.

On October 28, the Advisory Board reviewed progress on EC4 priorities, including development of the EC4 Annual Report and a transition memo for the incoming administration. Members emphasized the importance of clearly communicating EC4's purpose, centering implementation around the Climate Action Strategy, documenting funding limitations and vacancies, and providing recommendations for future action. Updates were shared on public engagement efforts, including the Bottle Bill implementation analysis, PREP-RI resiliency training resources, and the Green Bond ballot initiative. Resilience discussions highlighted infrastructure and climate resilience funding opportunities, progress on the Resilient Rhody Plan, new grant awards, flood mitigation funding, and recent community resilience projects. The Advisory Board also noted ongoing EC4-funded initiatives such as the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Climate Arts Grants Program and confirmed that the next combined November/December meeting will be held on December 2 before adjourning.

After a Gas Furnace Leak, One Homeowner Went All-Electric for Free



Image Credit: Canary Media. Frazier's house has become all-electric with solar panels pumping out power, thanks to a retrofit made possible by Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI).

When a dangerous gas furnace leak forced retired Baltimore educator Sherry Frazier and her daughter to evacuate their home, it became the catalyst for a complete energy makeover. With assistance from the Green & Health Homes Initiative (GHHI), a nonprofit focused on improving housing health and safety and directly serving Baltimore and Providence, Frazier's home was transformed into an all-electric residence powered in part by rooftop solar panels. The article highlights how electrification can deliver benefits beyond reducing carbon emissions. By replacing gas-powered appliances with electric alternatives, homeowners can improve indoor air quality, reduce health risks linked to fossil-fuel combustion, and lower utility costs. GHHI found that Frazier's bill has gone down by hundreds of dollars annually. When she was still using gas before the retrofit, her bills averaged about $230 per month. Electrification saved her $9 per month and going solar has brought her bill down to around $170 per month as of May. For qualifying low-income households, these improvements can be provided at little or no cost through a combination of federal, state, utility, healthcare, and philanthropic funding. Frazier says the upgrades have made her home safer, healthier, and more affordable to operate, illustrating how clean energy investments can directly improve quality of life.

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