

# RI 2025 Climate Action Strategy and CCAP

Environmental Justice and Equitable Transition Focus Area  
Meeting

March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**[bw]** RESEARCH  
PARTNERSHIP



Lighthouse Consulting  
Group, Inc.

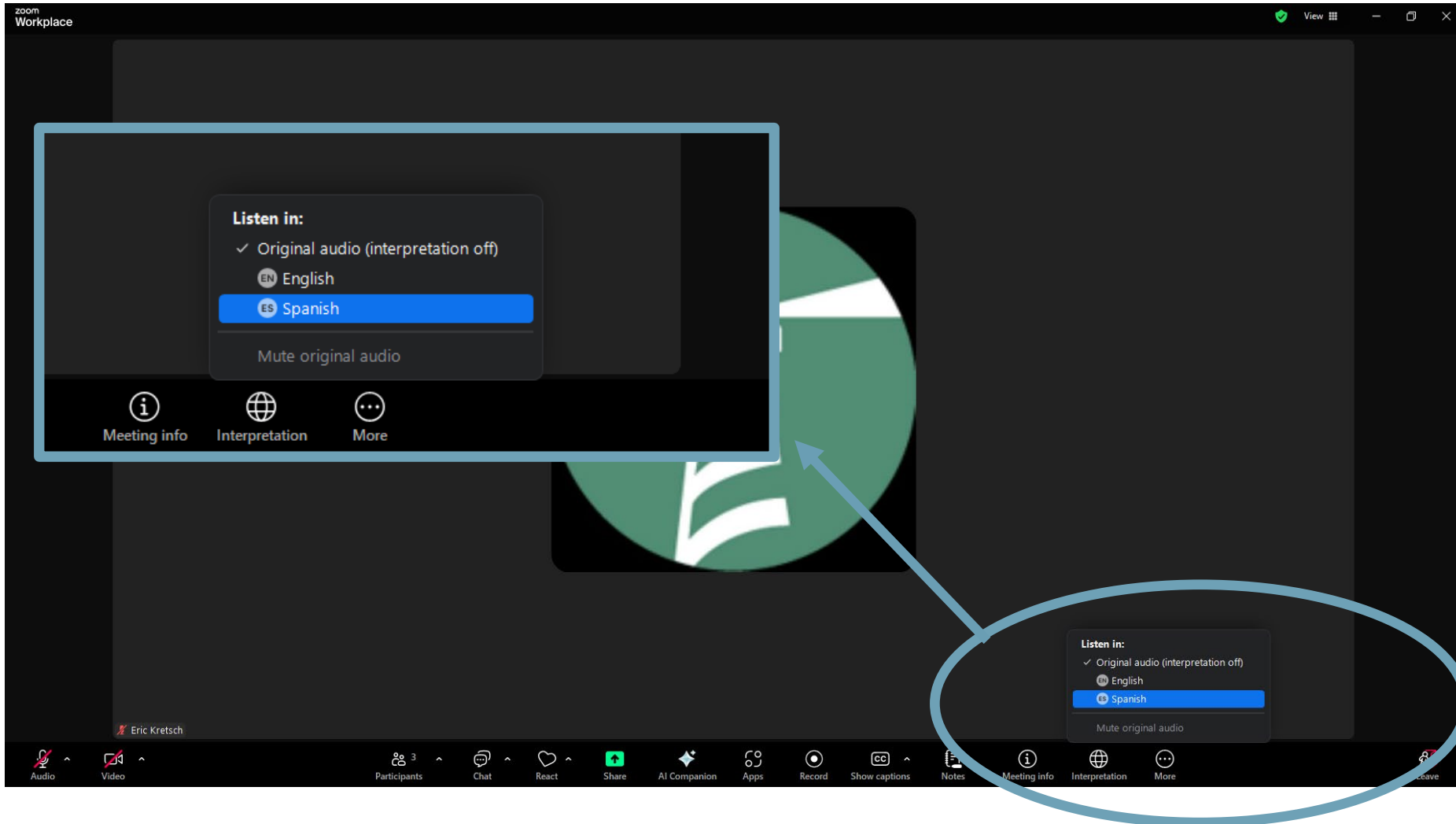


Energy+Environmental Economics

Chelsea Petrenko, E3  
Molly Bertolacini, E3  
Eric Kretsch, Lighthouse

# Spanish Interpretation Available

## Acceso a interpretación de Español



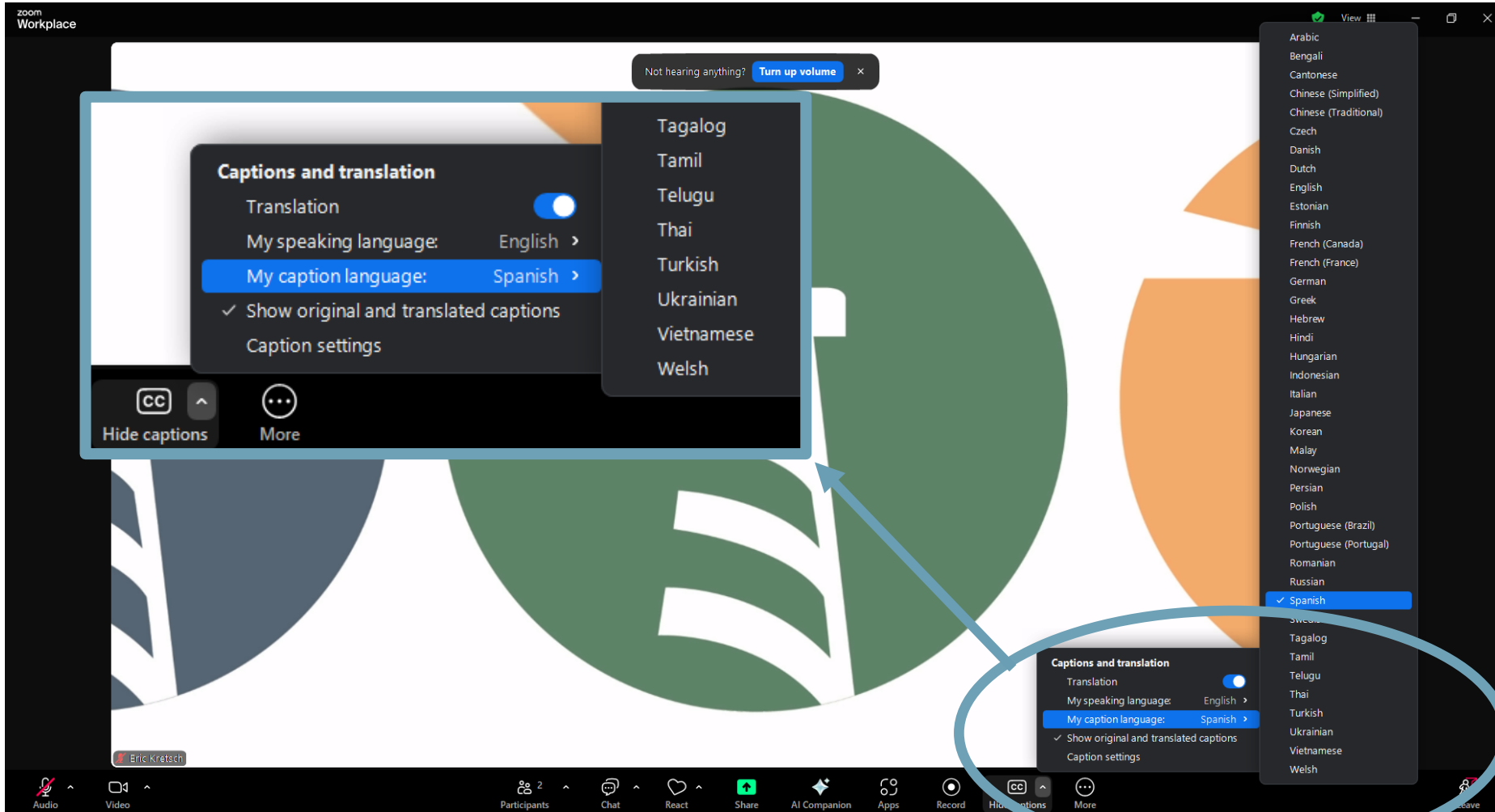
- + Click on “Interpretation”
- + Set to “Spanish”

Para Español:

- + Haz clic en el icóno “Interpretation”
- + Selecciona “Spanish”

# Translated Closed Caption (CC) Available

## Acceso a *subtítulos traducidos*



- + Click on Closed Caption “CC” icon
- + Set “Speaking Language”
- + Set “Caption Language”

Para Español:

- + Haz clic en el icóno “CC” para los subtítulos
- + Haz clic en “My speaking language” y selecciona “Spanish”
- + Haz clic en “My caption language” y selecciona “Spanish”

# Ground rules and guidelines to participation

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**+ This workshop is being recorded so we can accurately capture your comments. We do not intend to post this recording publicly.**



**+ Power off other electronics and mute yourself to limit distractions.**



**+ Make space and take space. Be mindful of how much airtime you take, but we encourage you to voice your support and concern.**



**+ There are multiple ways to participate:**

- Raise your hand to be called on
- Use the chat feature
- Utilize the Survey Monkey Form, so that we capture all you have to say.



**+ Thank you in advance for your participation.**

# What are we Covering Today? How will your Feedback be Included?

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- + This meeting will discuss the role of environmental justice and equity in the RI Climate Action Strategy. Specifically, we will discuss...
  - Key opportunities and barriers to **achieving environmental justice through decarbonization** in Rhode Island
    - *Decarbonization means to eliminate or reduce carbon dioxide emissions from activities like driving, heating our apartments/homes, and using electricity*
  - Climate change programs and policies that should be explored to **maximize benefits, prevent future harm, and undo past harm** to environmental justice communities

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- Climate change programs and policies that should be explored to **maximize benefits, prevent future harm, and undo past harm** to environmental justice communities

## + Your feedback will be used to...

- Help the project team determine priority policies and programs to include in the RI Climate Action Strategy (related to reducing carbon emissions)
- Develop the section of the RI Climate Action Strategy about burdens and co-benefits in environmental justice communities

# Agenda

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## + Welcome and introductions

## + Policy background and summary

## + Project overview and status

- Project goals and status
- What we've heard thus far
- Equity framework

## + Overview of modeling approach

## + Defining environmental justice (EJ) in RI

## + Presentation from Roots2Empower

- Breakout session #1 – Opportunities and barriers to advancing EJ and equity in RI

## + RI Climate Action Strategy focus areas, co-benefits, and disbenefits

- Breakout session #2 – Advancing EJ and equity in the RI Climate Action Strategy

## + Next steps and wrap up

# Introductions to Consultant Team



## Energy and Environmental Economics (E3)



**Tory Clark**  
Project Partner



**Chelsea Petrenko**  
Project Lead



**Molly Bertolacini**  
Project Manager



**Nathaniel Kinsman**  
University of RI Energy Fellow



## Lighthouse Consulting Group



**Eric Kretsch**  
Sr. Associate Facilitator



**Kyle McElroy**  
Facilitator



## BW Research Partnership



**Cai Steger**  
Project Manager



**Mitch Schirch**  
Modeling Specialist



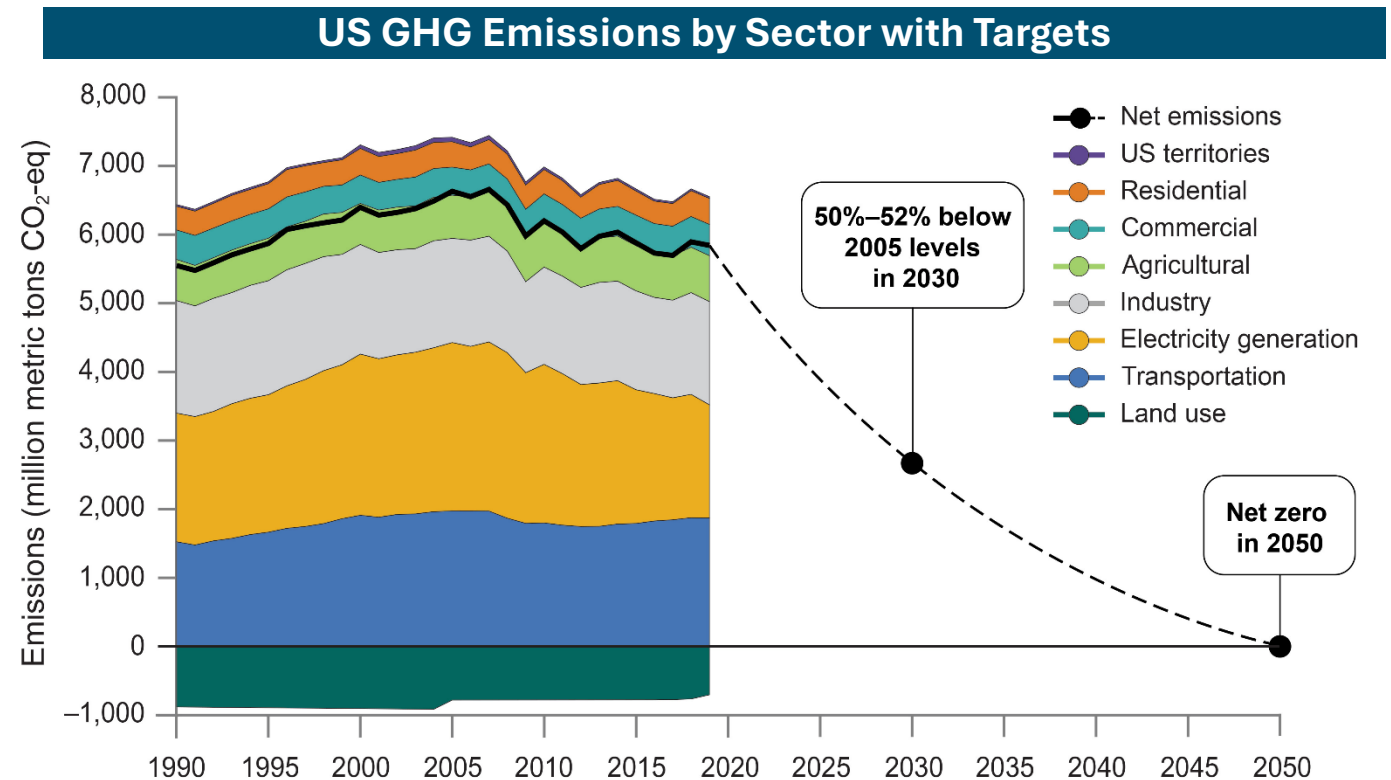
# Policy Background and Summary



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# Motivation for Climate Action

- + Greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) contribute to rising temperatures when released into the atmosphere, causing climate change
  - Climate change threatens human health and ecosystems
  - The negative effects of climate change disproportionately impact low-income and disadvantaged communities
- + The production and consumption of fossil fuels is the primary contributor to global GHG emissions
- + Many U.S. states are working towards achieving GHG reduction targets to slow the effects of climate change



# Climate Policy and Planning in Rhode Island

+ On April 14, 2021, RI Governor Dan McKee signed into law the 2021 Act on Climate, setting mandatory climate GHG reduction targets:

- 45% below 1990 emissions levels by 2030
- 80% below 1990 emissions levels by 2040
- “Net zero” by 2050

+ As required by the Act on Climate, the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) submitted an update to the 2016 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan in 2022

- The next step in the implementation of RI’s Act on Climate is the 2025 Climate Action Strategy, due at the end of 2025

+ At the same time, RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) has been awarded a planning grant through the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program

- The first step was completing a **Priority Climate Action Plan** which focused on a list of near-term and high-priority GHG reduction measures
- The next step in CPRG is the development of a **Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP)**

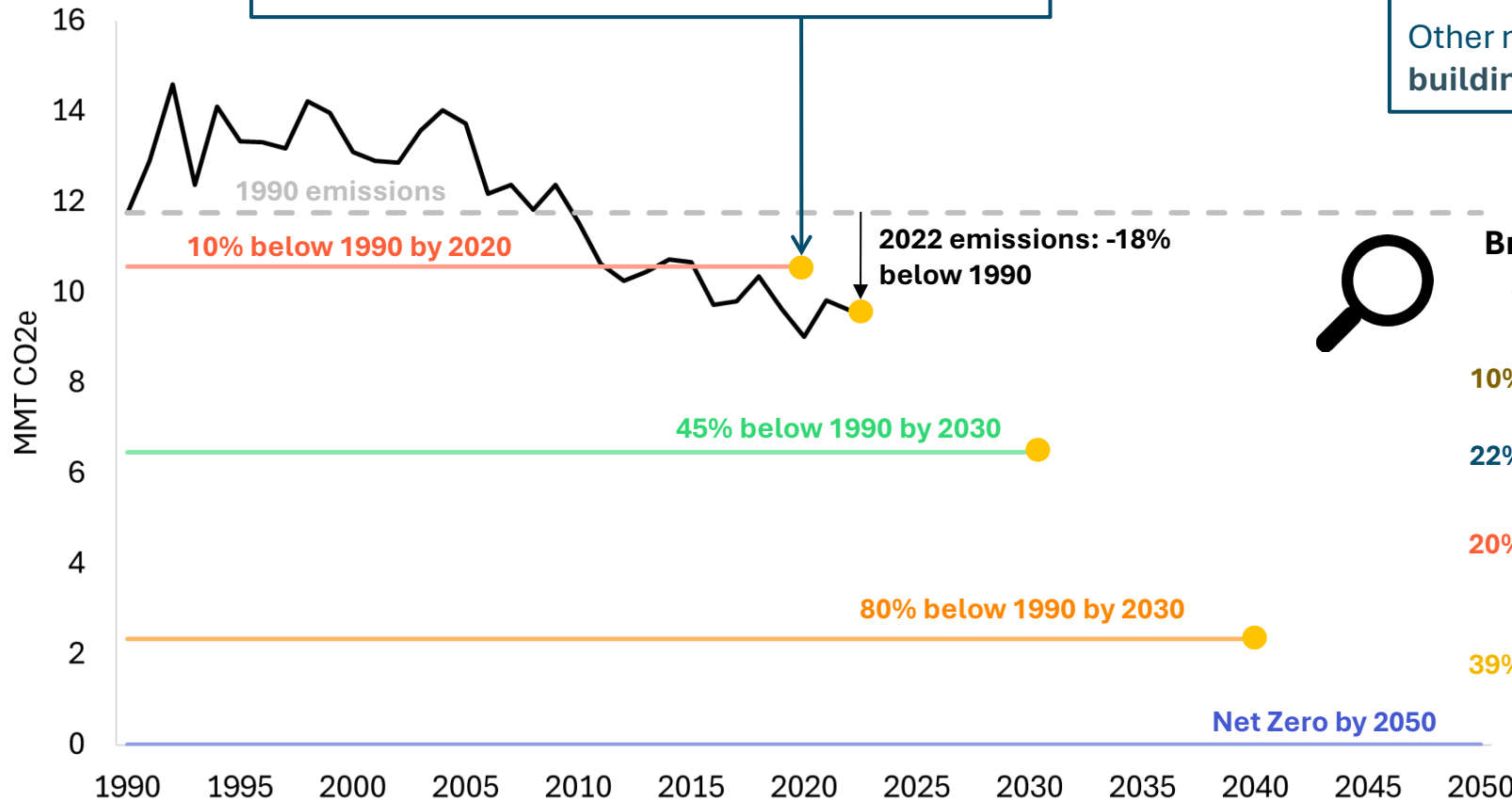


# Tracking and Reporting RI's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

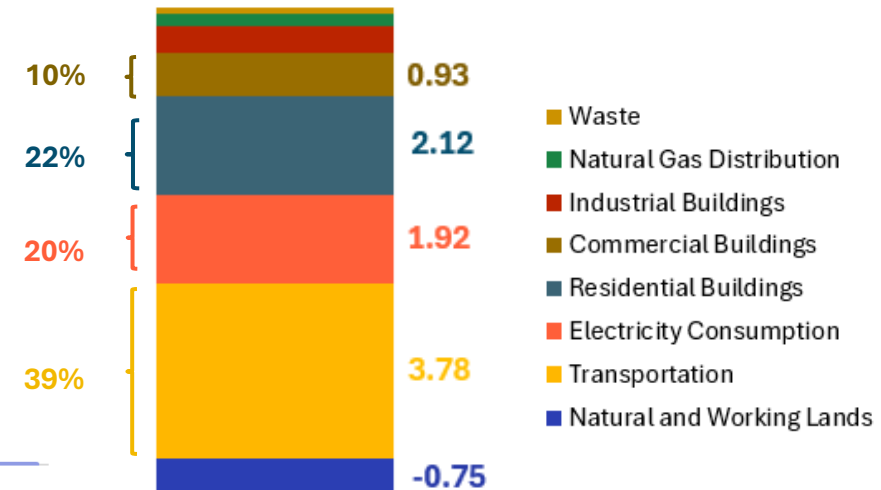
Rhode Island has made significant progress in reducing in-state GHG emissions, and has met its 2020 mandate of 10% reduction from 1990 emissions levels

As of 2022, **transportation** is the largest source of Rhode Island's GHG emissions (nearly 40%) with the majority caused by driving passenger vehicles.

Other major contributors include **residential buildings** (22%) and **electricity consumption** (20%)



Breakdown of RI emissions by sector in 2022 (MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e)



# Largest Sources of Emissions in Rhode Island



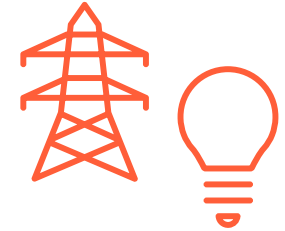
## Transportation

Emissions from travel and commuting, such as driving in a personal vehicle or riding the bus. These emissions are primarily caused by the combustion of fossil fuels, like gasoline and diesel, to power this travel.



## Buildings

Emissions from heating and cooling residential and commercial buildings, running kitchen equipment, or using other appliances like clothes dryers. These emissions are primarily from combustion of fossil fuel like natural gas and fuel oil to power this equipment.



## Electricity

Emissions from producing the electricity that Rhode Islanders use on a daily basis to run appliances, power electronics, run air conditioning, etc.

# Questions?



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# Project Overview and Status



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# Project Goals

The overarching goal of this project is to create the RI Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program and the RI 2025 Climate Action Strategy as part of RI's Act on Climate

## + Key elements of each plan will include:

- Energy efficiency in buildings and transportation
- Transition away from fossil fuel
- Transition to renewable electric power
- The removal of carbon from the air through land use and forest conservation
- A just transition for workers
- Considerations for energy affordability and utility bills
- Benefits to environmental justice and low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDAC)





# Topics for Focus Area Meetings in March and April

How will climate action affect jobs, workforce and businesses? How can RI ensure a just transition as we remove carbon from the economy?

**Workforce\***



How can RI ensure the communities most affected by climate change benefit from GHG reduction measures?

**EJ, equitable transition\***



How does climate action in RI affect the electricity supply? What role do electric and gas utilities play in climate action?

**Energy**



Which subsectors are the biggest contributors to RI's emissions? What strategies should be prioritized to reduce transportation emissions?

**Transportation**



What is the role of cities and municipalities in reducing emissions in RI?

**Municipalities**



What pathways for reducing building related emissions should be prioritized?

**Buildings**



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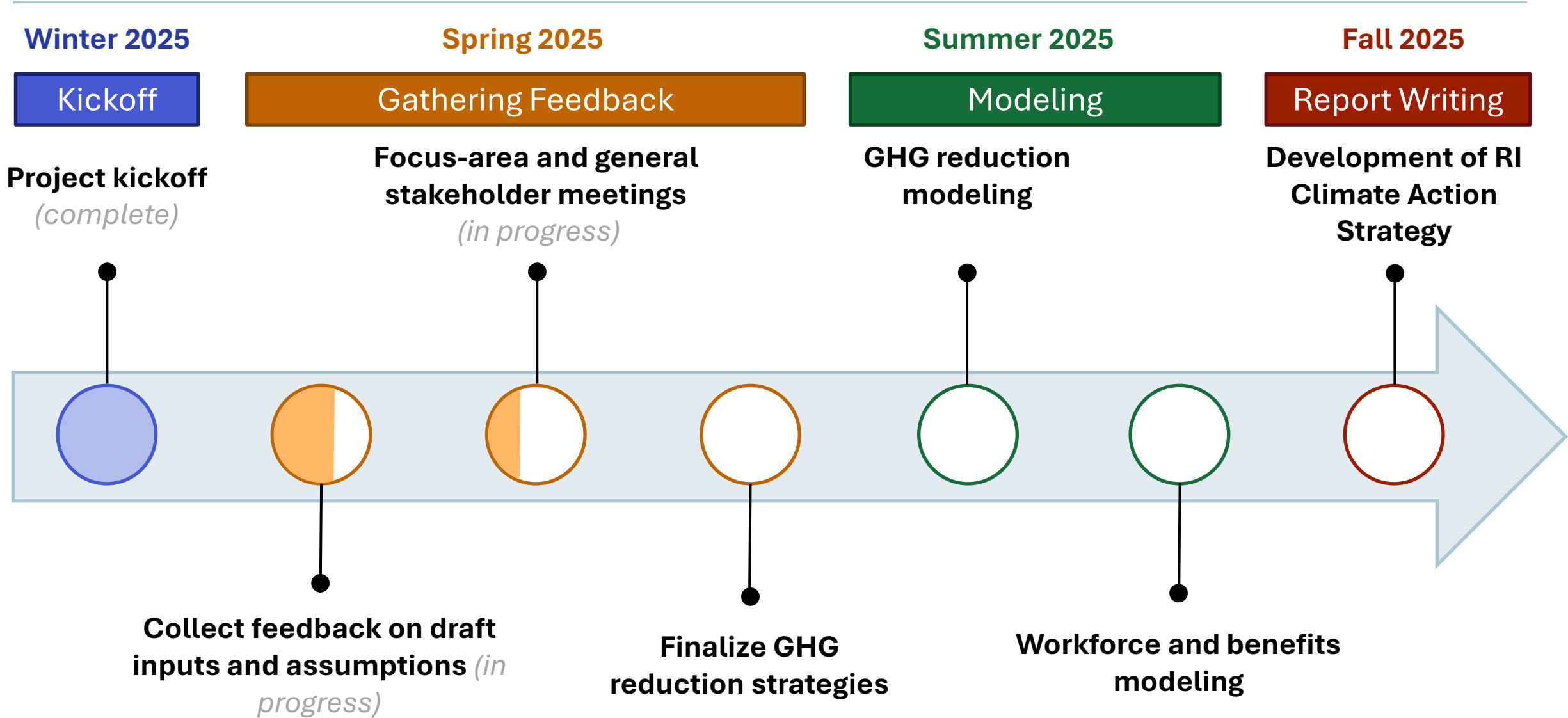


What pathways for reducing building related emissions should be prioritized?

**Buildings**



# Project Status and Timeline



# Incorporating Feedback from 1/9 Kickoff Meeting

## What we heard so far...

- + Stakeholders require sufficient notice for scheduled meetings and time to review materials
- + Importance of education in the plan
- + Equity must be integrated throughout the entirety of the plan, not just in the environmental justice section
- + The need to include businesses in the planning process
- + The importance of distinguishing between workforce development and worker impacts

## Key changes incorporated into process...

- + Providing “save-the-dates” for all Action Plan Development stage stakeholder meetings
- + Exploring how to integrate the topic of education into the RI Climate Action Strategy
- + Building a framework for integrating equity throughout the entirety of the plan
- + Leading conversations about RI worker impacts with interested groups, in addition to the workforce stakeholder meeting
- + Partnering with Commerce RI to integrate conversations with/about businesses

# The Role of an Equitable Transition in the RI Climate Action Strategy

The Act on Climate dictates that the RI Climate Action Strategy (RI CAS) “shall include an equitable transition to climate compliance for environmental justice populations, redress past environmental and public health inequities, and include a process where the interests of and people from populations most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and at risk of pollution, displacement, energy burden, and cost influence such plan.”



**Prioritize GHG Reduction Measures that Advance Equity and Environmental Justice**



**Collaborate with Communities Most Impacted by Climate Change and Policies**



**Consider Decarbonization Co-benefits** (e.g., Workforce Development and Climate Resilience)

# Overview of Modeling Approach



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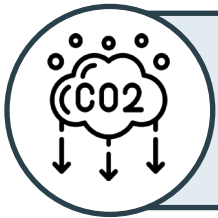
# Key Components of the RI Climate Action Strategy Modeling



**Creating a list of potential programs and policies to reduce emissions in Rhode Island**, such as rebates to increase electric vehicle purchases or building energy efficiency programs to reduce energy use in households.



**Projecting future emissions levels in RI in both the short term (e.g., by 2030) and the long term (e.g., by 2050)**. These projections will be based on current policies in RI and the proposed policies included in the RI Climate Action Strategy.



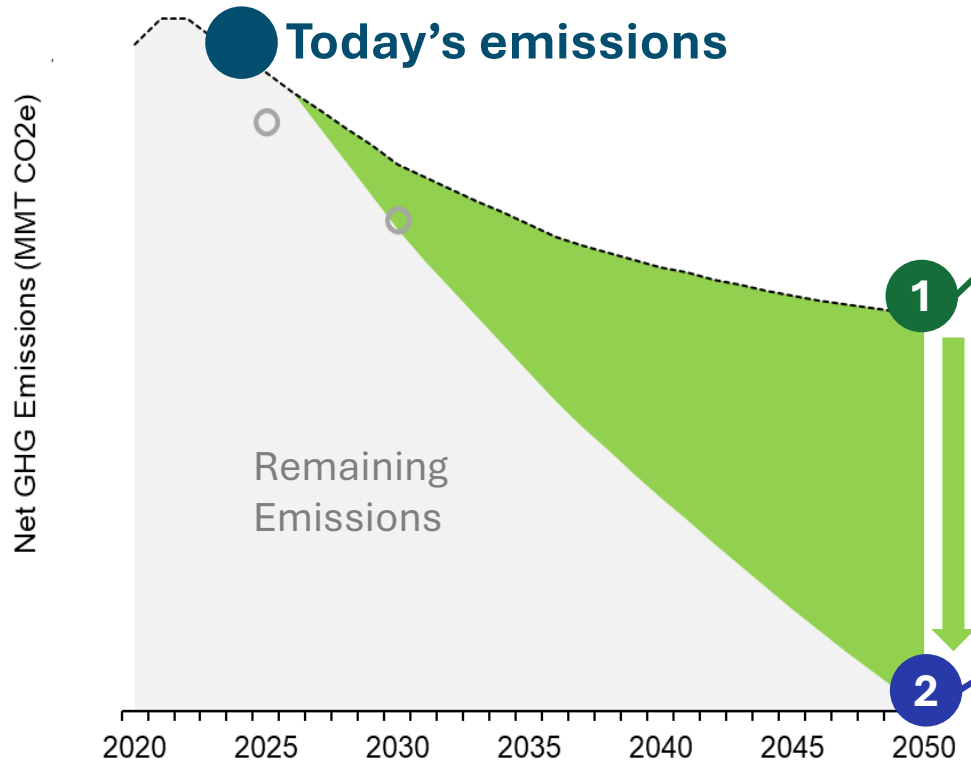
**Calculating how much each proposed policy will reduce carbon emissions**. For example, calculating the emissions reductions expected from a program that increases electric vehicle ridership and decreases driving in gasoline-powered vehicles.



**Estimating the benefits of climate action in Rhode Island**. For example, calculating the estimated number of jobs created because of the proposed policies, or calculating the air quality improvements.

# Scenarios for Projecting Future Emissions

## Illustrative Emissions Scenarios Result



### 1. Current Policy Scenario

This scenario will show us what our GHG emissions will look like in both the short and long term if we were to continue what we are doing today



### 2. Plan Implementation Scenario

This scenario will show us what our GHG emissions would look like after the Climate Action Strategy is carried out, including efforts to reduce emissions





# Questions?



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# Defining Environmental Justice in RI

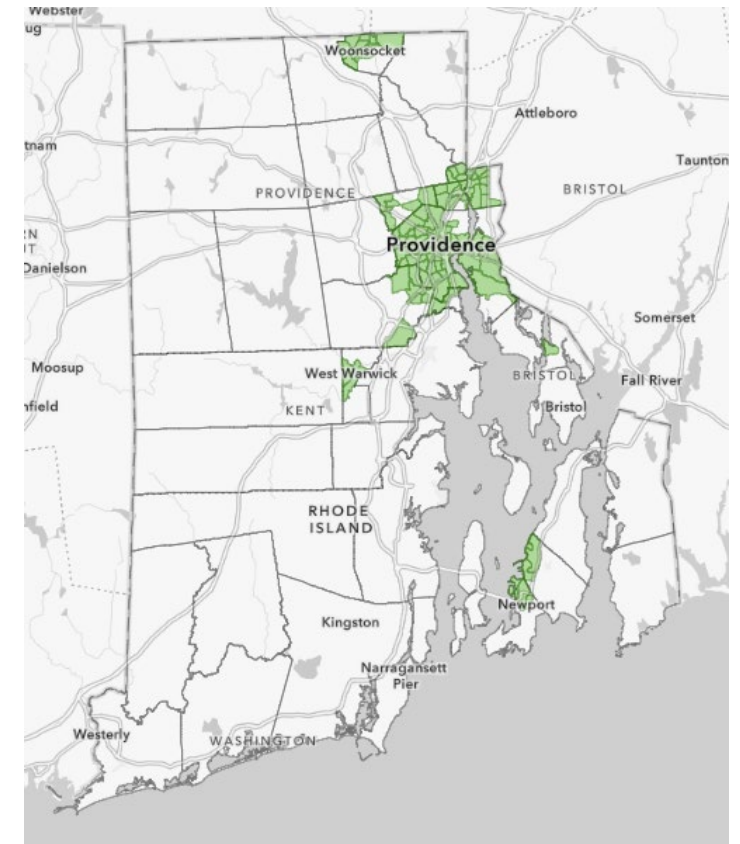


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# Defining Environmental Justice (EJ) in Rhode Island

- + People of color and low-income communities in RI are disproportionately impacted by environmental pollution and the negative effects of climate change
- + In its 2023 EJ Policy, RIDEM defines EJ as:
  - “...the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, English language proficiency, or income with respect to access to the state’s natural resources and the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.”
- + Also in that policy, RIDEM defines an EJ area as a census tract that meets one or more of these criteria\*:
  - Annual median household income is not more than 65% of statewide annual median household income
  - Minority population is greater than or equal to 40%
  - 25% or more of the households lack English language proficiency
  - Minorities make up 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income does not exceed 150% of statewide annual median income

## Rhode Island Environmental Justice Areas



**Presentation from  
Roots2Empower on Community  
Climate Conversations and EJ in  
RI's Climate Planning**



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# Advancing Environmental Justice

In Rhode Island's Climate  
Planning Process

March 19, 2025

**Nicole DiPaolo**  
Program Director, Roots 2Empower  
[www.Roots2EMpower.org](http://www.Roots2EMpower.org)



## About Roots

Our mission is to foster an equitable, community-driven transition to a regenerative future



Civic Engagement



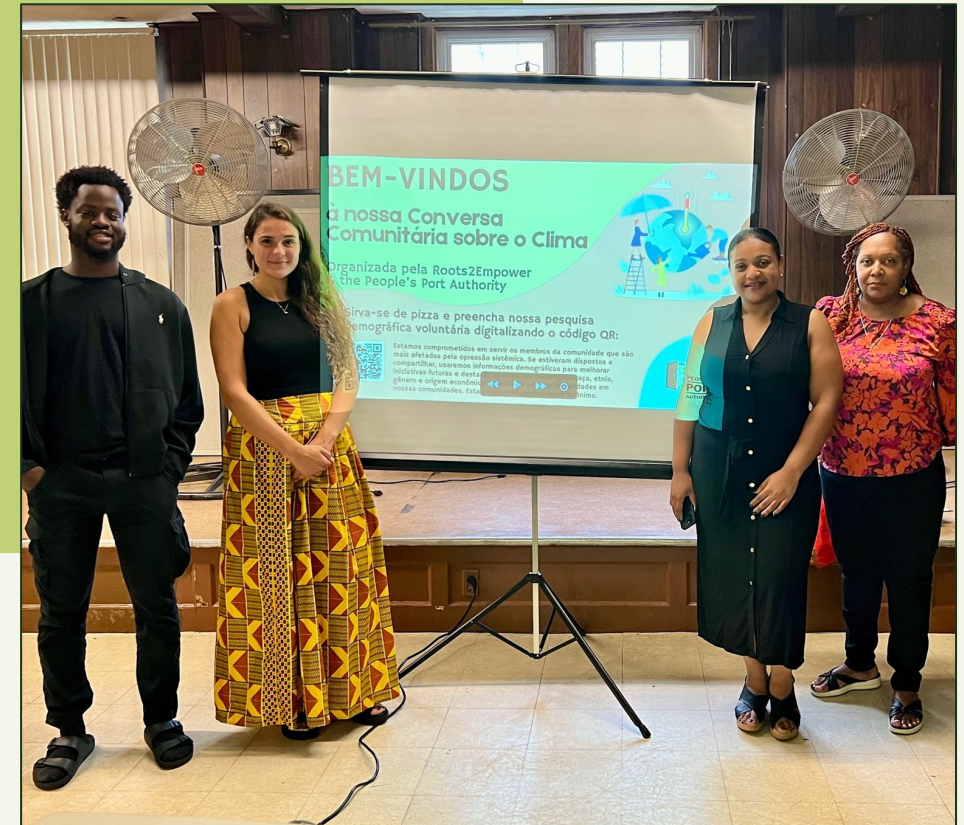
Skills Building



Environmental Connection



Public Education





238

People Registered



220

People Attended



170

Completed demographic form



109

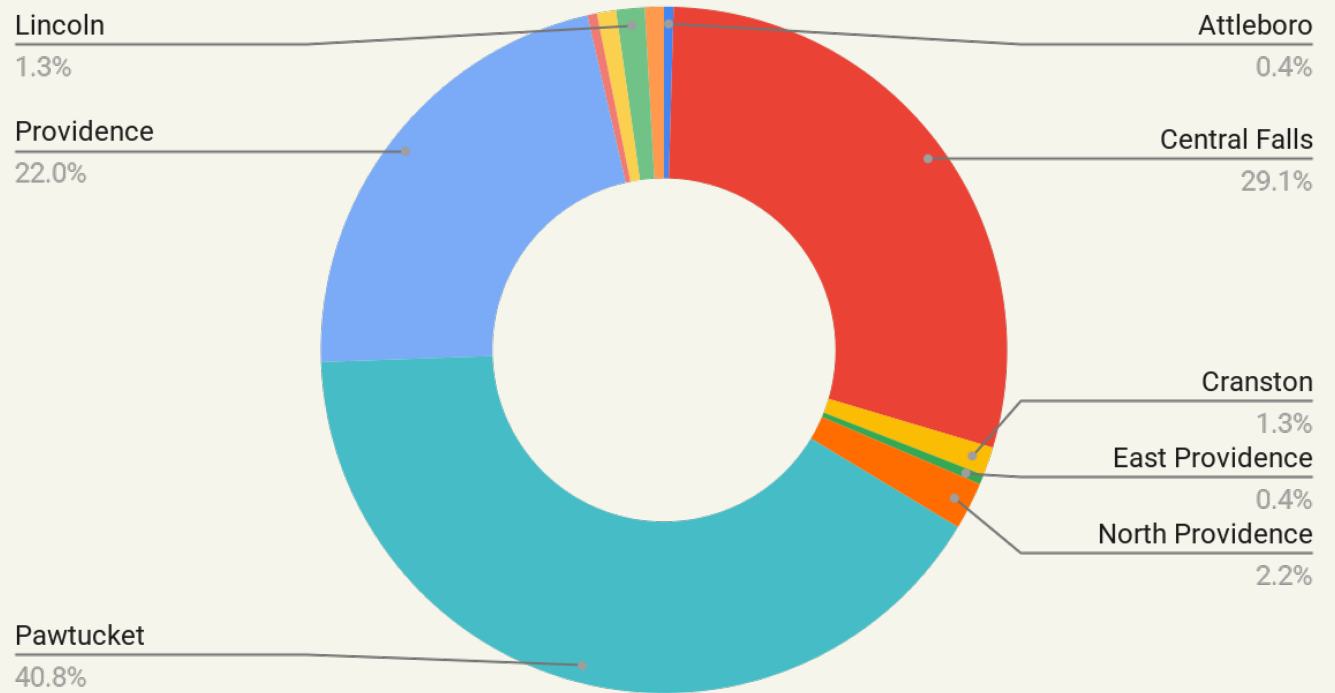
Completed feedback survey

## Seven Community Climate Conversations



# Who Attended

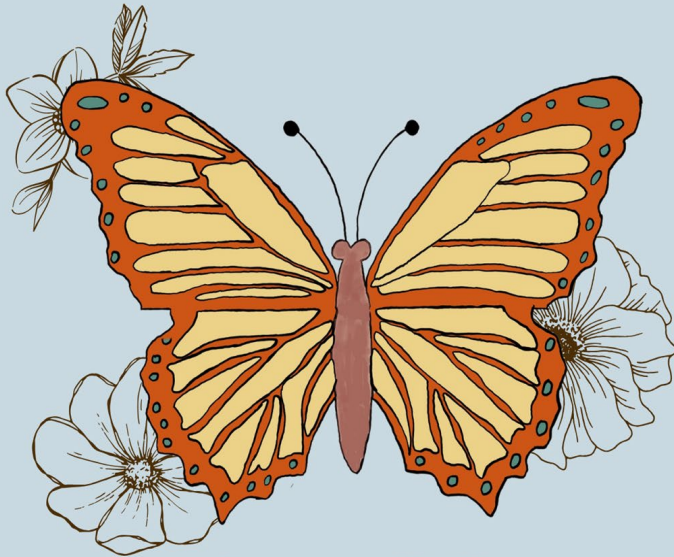
## Participant Residencies





# Fostering Environmental Justice in the Ocean State:

Past, Present, & Future  
Perspectives to Guide a  
Just & Equitable Transition to a  
Regenerative Economy



Summer 2024

By: Roots 2Empower &  
People's Port Authority

## Our Process

- **Free, prior, & informed consent:**  
Authored a booklet in English, Portuguese, and Spanish to ensure equal starting point
- **Anonymous, voluntary demographic form:**  
Commitment to serving those most impacted by structural racism & economic inequality
- **Information & discussion:**  
Iterative format that responded to feedback, presented key information & discussed as a group
- **Feedback forms:**  
Additional opportunity to provide feedback at the end to ensure input was documented



Compiled feedback into themed Word Clouds to get final input before publishing a report with our findings



# COMMUNITY CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS:

Insights for Developing a  
Community-Driven Climate Strategy

2025 Community Input Report



Inclusive input sessions, accessible information, equitable participation



Prioritize low-income communities of color, prevent gentrification



Conduct an equity analysis for all carbon reduction strategies proposed



Utilize participatory budgeting process for self-determination



Remove financial barriers



Support workers & increase access to opportunities for those underrepresented



Ensure accountability & transparency

# **Breakout Session #1: Opportunities and Barriers to Advancing EJ through Decarbonization in RI**



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# Questions

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- + Are there any thoughts/ideas you would like to uplift or add to the community input Roots 2Empower highlighted a few moments ago?
- + In your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities for advancing environmental justice in RI through **decarbonization**\*?
  - How can climate plans such as the RI Climate Action Strategy support those opportunities?
- + What do you see as the biggest barriers to advancing environmental justice in RI?

*\* Decarbonization means to eliminate or reduce carbon dioxide emissions from activities like driving, heating our apartments/homes, and using electricity.*

# Report Out



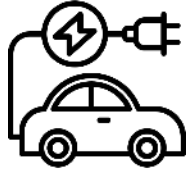
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# **RI Climate Action Strategy Focus Areas; Potential Co-Benefits and Disbenefits of Climate Action**



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# RI Climate Action Strategy Areas of Focus



## Transportation

Includes passenger **cars**, light-duty **trucks**, heavy-duty trucks, **buses**, **airplanes**, **watercrafts**, **trains**, and **lawn equipment**



## Buildings

Includes elements such **appliances** used in buildings (space heaters, etc.), **energy efficiency** in buildings, and **renewable energy** in buildings



## Energy

Includes topics related to our **energy supply**, such as electric and gas utilities and the impact of climate action on the energy we consume



## Workforce

Includes **job creation** from climate action, **impact on key job types**, opportunities for **workforce training**, and best practices to ensure **good jobs**



## Cities/ Municipalities

Includes the **role of city and municipality governments** in climate action and discussions on how cities can support communities in addressing climate change



# (Some) Co-Benefits of Decarbonization

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**Health, Safety,  
Comfort**



**Climate Resilience**



**Access to Outdoor  
Space**



**Access to Clean  
Technologies/Programs**



**Energy Affordability**



**Mobility**



**Job Creation**

# Potential Dis-Benefits of Decarbonization

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**Increased Housing  
Costs**



**Increased Transportation  
Costs**



**Increased Utility Bills**



**Small Business  
Impacts**



**Displacement of  
Renters**



**Uneven Distribution of  
Benefits**

# **Breakout Session #2: EJ and Equity Considerations in the Climate Action Strategy**



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# Questions

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- + How should environmental justice be considered and prioritized within each RI Climate Action Strategy focus area (i.e., what should be the equity and environmental justice considerations within transportation, buildings, workforce, etc.)?
- + How can co-benefits be maximized for EJ communities in each RI Climate Action Strategy focus area? As a reminder, co-benefits include:



Health, safety and comfort



Climate resilience



Access to outdoor space



Access to clean technologies/ programs



Energy affordability



Mobility



Job creation

- + How can new decarbonization programs and policies prevent future harm and undo past harms to EJ communities?

# Report Out



# Wrap Up and Next Steps

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## + E3 and RI will consider feedback from this session when...

- Developing the list of emissions reduction policies to include in the RI Climate Action Strategy
- Writing the section of the RI Climate Action Strategy focused on benefits and burdens in environmental justice communities
- Considering how to design programs and policies to be equitable and just

## + Feel free to submit additional thoughts on environmental justice in RI using the meeting survey or in the SmartComment portal: <https://ri.commentinput.com/?id=em4auDNSK>



## + RI, Lighthouse, and E3 will host additional engagement sessions over the course of March and April

## + E3 and BW will complete the emissions, workforce, and benefits modeling over the summer

# Upcoming Engagement Opportunities

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## + Building Focus Area Meeting

- 3/27/2025 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Virtual Zoom meeting

## + General Stakeholder Meeting [In-person]

- 3/31/2025 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island  
**Woonsocket** Campus

## + Municipalities Focus Area Meeting

- 4/4/2025 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Virtual Zoom meeting

## + Workforce Focus Area Meeting

- 4/8/2025 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Virtual Zoom meeting

## + Energy Focus Area Meeting

- 4/15/2025 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
- Virtual Zoom meeting

## + General Stakeholder Meeting [In-person]

- 4/17/2025 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- **Providence/Cranston**: Location TBD

## + General Stakeholder Meeting

- 4/29/2025 11:00 am - 1:00 pm
- Virtual Zoom meeting

## + General Stakeholder Meeting [In-person]

- 5/1/2025 12:00 pm - 2:00 PM
- **Newport**: Location TBD

# Staying in the Loop on the 2025 Strategy

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Sign up to receive ongoing announcements about engagement on the RI 2025 Climate Action Strategy [HERE](#)



Sign up for updates!

Get the latest updates from the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) in your inbox.



Subscribe



# Thank You

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How did we do? Help improve  
future engagement events



English



Español