

RIEC⁴ Science and Technical Advisory Board

From: Caitlin Chaffee, Chair, EC4 Science and Technical Advisory Board



Date: February 12, 2026

Additional Comments from the Rhode Island Science and Technology Advisory Board of the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council on the state's 2025

Re: **Climate Action Strategy**

The Science and Technology Advisory Board (STAB) of the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4)'s mandate under the 2014 Resilient Rhode Island Act and the 2021 Act on Climate is to:

“Evaluate to what extent the state’s policies and programs aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change are supported by the best available science and technical information”... and advise the EC4 on “key policy and management decisions”. This includes that the Board “Keep the executive climate change council abreast of important developments in scientific and technical information relating to climate change.”

Since the passage of the Resilient Rhode Island Act in 2014 and the Act on Climate in 2021, the strong scientific consensus that human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases adversely affect human health and welfare has been proven accurate, has stood the test of time, and is now reinforced by even stronger evidence. The Climate Action Strategy, an 18-month effort completed by the state in December 2025, was intended to provide a path to meeting the legislatively mandated targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions: 45 percent reduction by 2030, 80 percent by 2040, and 100 percent by 2050. The Act on Climate represented the first time the state has created targets based on the science of climate change, and the development of its targets was based on currently available technology.

The STAB has actively reviewed draft and final versions of the Climate Action Strategy and provided detailed technical comments on that document’s methods and ability to guide the state in meeting the legislative mandates of the Act on Climate. Those comments were submitted to the EC4, included as an appendix to the published document, and can be found on the Strategy webpage [here](#).

The Governor’s proposed budget for FY2027, released in January of 2026, includes provisions that would impede the state’s ability to meet the mandates within the Act on Climate. The STAB would like to highlight the Act on Climate compliance risks related to:

1. The rollback from 2033 to 2050 of the deadline for the Renewable Energy Standard. That mandate requires that utility companies source 100% of electricity from renewables. Additional changes to the Renewable Energy Standard compliance regulations are also of concern.
 - a. The 2033 deadline was the “current policy” scenario utilized in the 2025 Climate Action Strategy modeling, and without that basis, further policies cannot be

understood.

2. Second, the proposal includes significant changes to the compensation for solar resources, which threatens the business model for existing large scale solar projects and predictability for new solar projects, likely reducing the number of projects implemented.
3. Third, the proposal caps funding to energy efficiency programs at a level far below recent historical program funding. These programs are among the most immediate and lowest cost methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and can directly save money for all Rhode Islanders. Capping EE funding is likely to reduce energy efficiency efforts, increase long-term energy system costs, and delay attainment of Act on Climate targets.

These proposed budget provisions add serious concerns to those expressed in the STAB's December 9, 2025, memo regarding the various assumptions and uncertainties included in the 2025 Climate Action Strategy. A more detailed memo outlining these concerns will be made available at a future STAB meeting.