

Rhode Island General Assembly 2017-2018 Green Report Card

Rhode Island Senate Earns C-, House of Representatives earns C+

Environmental champions emerge from General Assembly for clean energy, waste, and land and water conservation

Overview

The Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) offers this biennial Green Report Card to evaluate the environmental records of Rhode Island lawmakers on ECRI priority issues for the combined 2017 and 2018 legislative sessions. The report issues letter grades to individual General Assembly members based on bill votes and sponsorships and qualitatively evaluates the governor's actions on environmental issues. The report further reflects on notable environmental policy developments in the two year span.

During the 2017 – 2018 legislative sessions, legislators and policymakers were tasked with addressing a variety of issues, including land and water conservation, waste and plastic pollution, toxics, transportation, and –most urgently– climate change. ECRI and our member organizations continued to voice our opposition to the construction of fossil fuel infrastructure in Burrillville and at the Port of Providence while pushing for measures that would lead to deep, economy-wide emissions reductions, like the Energize Rhode Island carbon pricing bill and the Global Warming Solutions Act. Although the impacts of climate change are quickly becoming more apparent, the General Assembly largely failed to act on these policies or other measures that would safeguard Rhode Islanders from the effects of global warming and sea level rise.

The General Assembly also considered legislation to preserve protected lands and open space and encourage outdoor recreation. Most prominently, they entertained bills in both years that would have allowed the City of Providence to monetize its municipal water system, drawn from the Scituate Reservoir. The General Assembly made no decisions

about these issues because of concerns, among others, over protecting the forested buffer around the reservoir and a lack of clarity related to the oversight of whichever entity is eventually selected to manage the system.

Despite the fact that Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation has estimated that the state's Central Landfill has about fifteen years left until it reaches capacity, the General Assembly failed to take any action on addressing the waste- and litter-related issues that we are currently facing in Rhode Island. It took no action on bills that would have reduced plastic pollution at its source or encouraged more recycling and composting across the state.

See Inside:

- **Gov. Raimondo's third and fourth years**
- **General Assembly letter grades**
- **Looking ahead to the next session**

Over the course of 2017 – 2018, Governor Raimondo and the state agencies instituted several aspirational policies that indicate a commitment to reducing emissions, cutting waste, and protecting Rhode Island's natural environment. However, the results of many of the plans and targets have yet to materialize, and the Governor's Office and state agencies have failed to institute accountability mechanisms for these goals.

In the coming years, the Environment Council of Rhode Island hopes to see the General Assembly and Governor tackle policies that will lead to ambitious, long-term, sustainable programs that benefit our environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

As the effects of climate change become more apparent, it will become critical for Rhode Island's leaders to act to make the state's coastlines and communities more resilient, reduce its dependency on fossil fuels across the economy, and encourage the development of local renewable energy projects. Unfortunately, the General Assembly did little during the past two years to help prepare the state to adapt to new climate realities; in some cases, the legislature considered bills that would prevent the state from reaching the emissions reductions targets set out in the Resilient Rhode Island Act of 2014.

2017 saw the passage of the only bills addressing clean energy and climate change during the two-year legislative cycle. Rep. Deb Ruggiero (D-Jamestown, Middletown) and Sen. William Conley (D-East Providence, Pawtucket) sponsored the "Renewable Energy Growth Program Extension" (H5274, S112), which continued the program incentivizing renewable energy projects of all sizes across the state. Rep. Marcia Ranglin-Vassell (D-Providence) and Sen. Conley shepherded legislation directing the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council to study carbon pricing in Rhode Island (H6305, S108) through both chambers. Unfortunately, the Governor and legislature have failed to fund this study. Finally, in the brief September 2017 legislative session, Rep. Deborah Ruggiero and Sen. Erin Lynch Prata succeeded in passing legislation (H5536, S877) that removes barriers to municipal aggregation, also known as community energy choice. This legislation will allow municipalities and communities to purchase greener, cheaper electricity.

In 2017, the House and Senate passed a bill (H5897, S756) requiring "real public property" to conform to LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) and SITES high-performance green building standards. Rep. Christopher Blazejewski (D-Providence) and Sen. Louis DiPalma (D-Little Compton, Middletown, Newport, Tiverton) sponsored the bill. The legislation amended the 2009

Green Buildings Act, which codified the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment) high performance green building standard for public buildings and facilities. With the 2009 Act, Rhode Island became the first State in the nation to adopt LEED into public law. The 2017 amendments make Rhode Island the first to expand green building standards to public property.

At the end of the 2017 legislative session, an energy efficiency cap sponsored by Rep. Arthur Corvese and Sen. Marc Cote (H5640, S632) passed the General Assembly. The legislation limited funding to the state's award-winning energy efficiency programs. Meanwhile, the 2017 budget scooped \$12 million from the funds reserved for energy efficiency. These two legislative acts imposed significant constraints on the ability of the efficiency programs to reduce emissions and costs for ratepayers throughout 2018.

The EnergizeRI Coalition's signature legislation, the "Clean Energy Investment and Carbon Pricing Act," was introduced in both years (H5369, S365 in 2017; H7400, S2188 in 2018) by Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Providence) and Sen. Jeanine Calkin (D-Warwick). The bill would have put an economy-wide price on carbon emissions and funded investments in clean energy and climate resilience. Despite being an ECRI priority both years, it failed to gain traction and was not voted on by either chamber.

The "Global Warming Solutions Act" (H7827, S2747) attempted to codify the emissions reduction targets set out in the Resilient RI Act. Introduced by Rep. Arthur Handy (D-Cranston) and Sen. Dawn Euer (D-Newport) in 2018, the bill would require mandatory, legally enforceable regulations ratcheting down carbon emissions from the three major sectors contributing to the problem—electricity, transportation, and buildings. It received hearings in both houses, but both the Senate and House Environment Committees failed to bring the legislation to a vote.

Early in 2018, the Trump administration announced that it was planning to suspend the moratorium on offshore fossil fuel drilling off the east coast of the United States. The response from Rhode Island was swift and defiant, yet of the four pieces of legislation introduced in the General Assembly to oppose these efforts, only one passed. Rep. Lauren Carson (D-Newport) and Sen. Euer introduced bills (H7250, S2116) designed to prohibit drilling and exploration activities within state waters while restricting oil and natural gas infrastructure. Those bills both died in committee, perhaps due to concerns raised by the Coastal Resources Management Council that the legislation would preempt its existing oversight. Rep. Regunberg and Sen. Joshua Miller (D-Cranston) introduced resolutions (H7179, S2360) opposing President Trump's plans for offshore drilling, but only the Senate version passed while the House failed to take the matter up.

The General Assembly had a mixed record on energy efficiency in 2018. As in 2017, legislators introduced bills in 2018 to limit investment in the state's energy efficiency programs. This year, Rep. Kenneth Marshall and Sen. Marc Cote introduced H7808 and S2499, respectively, which would ECRI again opposed these bills; after a significant push by opponents, the potentially harmful legislation did not pass. On the other hand, appliance standards bills (H7828, S2362) introduced by Rep. Art Handy and Sen. Jeanine Calkin, which would have increased minimum energy and water efficiency requirements for products sold in the state, failed to pass.

Finally, two bills arose late in the 2018 session that ECRI opposed. The first was a bill (H8020, S2652) that would have allowed biomass power plants to qualify for renewable energy credits. The bill was introduced on behalf of a developer who wanted to build a high-heat biomass electric generation facility in Johnston. ECRI fought this bill because burning some forms of biomass emits more carbon than burning some fossil fuels. The Senate version, sponsored by Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski (D-New Shoreham, South Kingstown), sailed through the hearing process and passed with

only three dissenting votes, while opponents of the bill were able to stop the House version, sponsored by Rep. Kenneth Marshall (D-Bristol) from reaching a floor vote. The second bill (H8141), introduced by Rep. Jeremiah O'Grady (D-Lincoln, Pawtucket), would have prohibited renewable energy incentives for solar projects in forests. ECRI opposed this bill because it reduced incentives for renewable development but not for other, more harmful kinds of development. ECRI supports an approach to renewable energy siting that both recognizes the need to preserve forest and open space while also maintaining incentives for renewable development.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION

The 2017 – 2018 sessions led to strong steps forward on land and water conservation and outdoor recreation. The biggest accomplishment of the 2018 session was placing a \$47.3 million Green Economy Bond on November's ballot for voter consideration. The Bond will fund ten programs that protect and restore the state's lands and waters and support outdoor recreation.

Legislation sponsored by Sen. Susan Sosnowski (D-New Shoreham, South Kingstown) and Rep. Cale Keable (D-Burrillville, Glocester) to increase penalties for people who intentionally damage protected lands, including stealing stone walls and cutting trees, (S2682, H7383), passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor. Prior penalties were mild, but this legislation increases fines, enables land trusts and municipalities to recoup costs for restoring intentionally damaged protected lands, and establishes clear standards for appraising the damage when trees are cut.

"Right of Footways" legislation (S2758, H7978) clarifies the public's right to use public trails such as the Cliff Walk and the North-South Trail and similar trails around the state. This legislation, sponsored by Senator Conley and Representative Handy, passed the House but stalled in Senate Committee.

The successful Pollinator Working Group was extended for three more years by a House resolution sponsored by Representative Handy (H8138). The Pollinator Working Group is managed by the Department of Environmental Management and staffed by the RI Nursery and Landscape Association and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island.

Equally important was the successful prevention of several bills that would impede land conservation, water management, and outdoor recreation:

Legislation to disband the Smithfield Land Trust (a land trust affiliated with the municipality) Sponsored by Rep. Thomas Winfield (D-Smithfield, Glocester) in 2018 (H7425) stalled in House committee and was never introduced in the Senate.

Sen. Michael McCaffrey (D-Warwick) and Rep. Aaron Regunberg (D-Providence), sponsored S386 in 2017 and H7524 in 2018 to eliminate liability protection for outdoor recreation activities on state and municipal properties. ECRI opposed this legislation, as it would have increased insurance costs for towns and caused the state and towns to close properties for outdoor recreation to reduce their risk of liability. The bills died in committee in both years.

In 2017, Rep. Gregory Costantino (D-Lincoln, Smithfield, Johnston) sponsored legislation to change the "Right to Farm" law (H6172) so that people who own or lease farmland could use these properties for commercial entertainment activities, such as concerts, festivals, or weddings, without local planning and zoning approval. This legislation, which was not supported by farmers, passed the House but was never introduced in the Senate.

In 2018, legislation introduced by Rep. Scott Slater (D-Providence) and Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Providence) would set the stage for changing the ownership and management of the Providence Water Supply (H8123 and S2838). The primary goal of these bills was to enable the City of Providence to obtain revenue from the transfer of ownership of Providence Water and its assets, including reservoirs and thousands of acres of land. These bills would allow a

municipal water supply system and any regional water quality management district commission to enter into an agreement effectively merging the entities and becoming a public utility. Another bill (S2803), sponsored by Sen. Frank Lombardo (D-Johnston), proposed to authorize the Narragansett Bay Commission to acquire water suppliers and treatment facilities. These bills did not pass.

TOXICS AND PUBLIC HEALTH

One of the most significant victories for public health over the past two years came with the passage of a the bill banning the use of organohalogens, a known endocrine-disruptor, in flame retardants applied to household furniture and children's products. The bill (H5082, S166), sponsored by Rep. Michael Morin (D-Woonsocket) and Sen. Adam Satchell (D-West Warwick), passed unanimously in the Senate but was left in limbo when the 2017 session was called to an abrupt halt in June. It eventually passed the House in the special September session and was allowed to become law without the signature of the governor.

The legislature failed to take action on two other pieces of legislation. First, in 2017, Rep. Carlos Tobon (D-Pawtucket) and Sen. Cynthia Coyne (D-Barrington, Bristol, East Providence) introduced a bill (H5905, S707) that would have required health and beauty products manufacturers to disclose all of the ingredients used in goods sold in Rhode Island, particularly in fragrance used in those products. Second, Rep. Alex Marszalkowski (D-Cumberland) and Sen. Calkin introduced legislation (H7732, S2654) to eliminate the use of PFAS – chemicals applied to products that make them nonstick and that have been shown to negatively affect human health – in food packaging. Neither bill made it out of committee in the House or Senate.

WASTE AND PLASTIC POLLUTION

Once again, the 2017 - 2018 session saw very little effort on the part of the General Assembly to address waste-related policy problems here in Rhode Island,

including the growing and increasingly visible issue of plastic pollution. Besides their impact on wildlife and marine ecosystems, single-use plastics in the environment impose cleanup costs on taxpayers and harm Rhode Island's vibrant tourism economy. While several municipalities took steps to stop plastic pollution by prohibiting the distribution of thin-film plastic bags, similar bills in the House and Senate died in committee.

Rep. John Edwards (D-Portsmouth, Tiverton) introduced H5946 early in the 2017 session, which would have banned retail establishments from giving out free plastic bags to customers. As expected, the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources held the bill for further study. The bill was resurrected late in the session, this time with language written by the packaging industry that would have only established minimum recyclable content standards for plastic and paper bags while at the same time prohibiting municipalities from passing their own bag bills and nullifying those already in existence. Due to pressure from environmental organizations and municipalities, Rep. Edwards withdrew the bill.

Long-time single-use plastic foe Sen. Joshua Miller introduced the "Plastic Waste Reduction Act" in 2017 and 2018 (S109), which sought to ban single-use plastic bags, polystyrene foam, and plastic water bottles. ECRI members testified in support, but noted that because the three plastic waste sources each present unique management challenges, those items should be addressed through separate pieces of legislation. Sen. Miller reintroduced the bill in 2018 with Rep. Carol Hagan McEntee (D-South Kingstown, Narragansett) sponsoring the House companion bill (S2354, H7851). The newer version still sought to phase out single-use plastic bags but also allowed retailers to charge a fee for more expensive paper bags. Neither bill made it out of committee.

ECRI also supported Rep. Jean Philippe Barros' (D-Pawtucket) effort to address plastic pollution by

establishing a 5-cent deposit for plastic, glass, and aluminum beverage containers (H5801), but the bill died in the House Finance Committee.

Rep. Lauren Carson's "School Waste Recycling and Refuse Disposal Act" (H7699) would have required school food service vendors to comply with all current recycling and composting laws and to donate all unused food to local food banks. The bill passed the House but was not introduced in the Senate.

TRANSPORTATION

The transportation sector is one of the largest contributors of carbon emissions, yet the legislature has done very little to address public transit, vehicle emissions, and the other pressing transportation-related issues that Rhode Island faces. The legislature did help advance the construction of a commuter rail station on the Pawtucket/Central Falls line through the passage of a bill (H7813), sponsored by Rep. Carlos Tobon (D-Pawtucket), which allows the Rhode Island Public Rail Corporation to change its risk management and indemnification standards so as to meet the requirements of Amtrak and the MBTA.

The legislature also passed legislation in 2017 (H5182, S0175) sponsored by Sen. Sosnowski and Rep. Kathleen Fogarty (D-South Kingstown) to protect motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists by prohibiting the use of cell phones and other non-hands-free devices while operating a motor vehicle.

On the 2018 ballot:

The General Assembly adopted a budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 that includes a \$48.5 million *Green Economy Bond* referendum. If approved by voters in November, this bond referendum will provide funding for 9 initiatives that improve Rhode Island's communities and strengthen our economy. The bond includes funding for:

- Local Recreation Projects (\$5 million)
- State Bikeway Development (\$5 million)
- Access to Farmland and Open Space (\$4 million)
- State Recreation Projects (\$10 million)
- Brownfield Remediation and Economic Development (\$4 million)
- Coastal Resiliency and Public Access to Coastline (\$5 million)
- Clean Water and Drinking Water (\$6.1 million)
- Wastewater Treatment Facility Resilience Improvements (\$5 million)
- Dam Safety (\$4.4 million)

A broad coalition of organizations advocated for the General Assembly to approve the Green Economy Bond referendum. Additionally, Governor Raimondo has been a strong supporter of the bond.

GOVERNOR RAIMONDO'S THIRD AND FOURTH YEARS

Action on Climate Resiliency and Waste, But Fossil Fuel Infrastructure Still Looms Large

In 2015 – 2016, Governor Raimondo's signature contribution to environmental protection was the establishment of the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. Governor Raimondo also appointed several environmental leaders, including Marion Gold and Carol Grant, to state agencies and the Public Utilities Commission. In 2017 – 2018, we saw these measures falter in some areas and succeed in others. In addition, Governor Raimondo used Executive Orders to position her administration as a leader on environmental issues.

In 2017, the Public Utilities Commission and Division of Public Utilities and Carriers took the energy policy spotlight as Governor Raimondo directed the state energy issues to facilitate a series of technical

meetings—and, eventually, a settlement process with National Grid—on Power Sector Transformation. This policy process aimed to prepare the state's electric grid for future vehicle and building electrification, increasingly distributed renewable energy resources, and an improved utility incentive structure. Although Power Sector Transformation resulted in promising moves towards grid upgrades that will be necessary in a renewable energy future, the Public Utilities Commission appointed by Governor Raimondo significantly decreased the ambition of the stakeholders' proposal.

Although Power Sector Transformation was the most concrete step that Governor Raimondo and her appointees took towards mitigating climate change in

2017 and 2018, she also took other, more aspirational steps. In March, 2017, Governor Raimondo announced a goal of reaching 1000 MW of in-state clean energy projects by 2020—ten times the amount that had so far been installed. The administration has not published an update on this goal or a plan to reach it. In June, 2017, Governor Raimondo “reaffirmed” the state’s commitment to Resilient Rhode Island’s emissions reduction targets in an Executive Order on the Paris Climate Agreement.

On the resiliency and adaptation side, an Executive Order in September, 2017 appointed a Chief Resiliency Officer with the directive to identify and oversee the implementation of priority actions to enhance Rhode Island’s climate resiliency. The Resilient Rhody Climate Preparedness Strategy came out in July, 2018.

Since 2016, the proposed Burrillville natural gas power plant has remained a highly contested political issue. The plant’s opponents have demonstrated that new fossil fuel power generation is unnecessary and will result in the state’s failure to meet emissions reduction targets. Despite her climate goals, Governor Raimondo has yet to come out in opposition to the plant.

In July of 2018, Governor Raimondo issued an executive order directing a number of state agencies and stakeholder groups to work together to address plastic pollution in Rhode Island communities and Narragansett Bay. She envisions a comprehensive

approach to reducing single-use plastic consumption through a combination of public education and outreach, “lead by example” practices and policies in state government, and statewide legislation. The plastics task force began meeting in the fall of 2018 and is scheduled to submit its recommendations to the governor in the spring of 2019. By addressing single-use plastics as a class rather than individual products, the governor has positioned Rhode Island to be a national leader in addressing plastic pollution.

Overall, Governor Raimondo took more action on environmental issues during the second half of her term than she did in the first two years. She has taken actions to prepare Rhode Island for climate change, reduce carbon emissions, decrease plastic pollution, and provide resources to municipalities to protect parks and open space and expand the state’s bike path network. She also came out strongly against the Trump administration’s plan to open up New England coastal waters to offshore drilling and opposed efforts to make biomass eligible for net metering incentives. But she did fail to square her support for the Burrillville power plant and neutrality on National Grid’s LNG facility with her climate goals. Her administration has also been lackadaisical about appointing members to the Water Resources Board, and she faced harsh criticism when she did not renew the terms of three environmentalists on the Coastal Management Resources Council (CRMC) board, appointing instead new members with dubious qualifications.

2017-2018 Green Report Card Grades: **R.I. State Senate**

Senator	Green Buildings Act S952	RGGI Extension S112	Carbon Pricing Study Bill S108	Municipal Aggregation S2877	Flame Retardants in Furniture S166	Protected Land Penalty Increase S2682	Biomass Fuels for Net Metering S2652	Offshore Drilling Resolution S2360	Municipal Infrastructure Grants S2239	Voting Rate	Sponsor Points	Raw Score	Curved Score	Letter Grade	Voting Record		
															+	-	o
Algiere	+	o	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	46	0	46	69	C	+	-	o
Archambault	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	56	5	49	73	C	+	-	o
Calkin	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	63	30	93	121	A	+	-	o
Cano*						+	-	+	+	59	0	59	66	C	+	-	o
Ciccone	+	+	o	+	+	+	-	+	o	43	0	43	66	C	+	-	o
Conley	+	+	+	o	+	+	-	+	+	46	30	76	102	A	+	-	o
Cote	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	o	+	46	-20	26	47	F	+	-	o
Coyne	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Crowley	+	+	o	+	+	+	o	+	o	54	0	54	78	B	+	-	o
Da Ponte	+	o	+	+	+	+	-	+	o	43	0	43	66	C	+	-	o
DiPalma	+	+	o	+	+	+	-	+	+	46	10	56	80	B	+	-	o
Euer	+	o	o	+	o	+	-	+	+	54	20	74	100	A	+	-	o
Felag	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Fogarty	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	o	o	43	0	43	66	C	+	-	o
Gallo	o	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	46	0	46	69	C	+	-	o
Gee	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-7	0	-7	11	F	+	-	o
Goldin	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	60	0	60	85	B	+	-	o
Goodwin	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	-10	39	62	D	+	-	o
Jabour	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Lombardi	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Lombardo	o	+	+	o	+	+	-	+	+	43	0	43	66	C	+	-	o
Lynch Prata	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	10	59	84	B	+	-	o
McCaffrey	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	-10	39	62	D	+	-	o
Metts	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Miller	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	60	20	80	107	A	+	-	o
Morgan	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	o	-	-24	0	-24	-8	F	+	-	o
Nesselbush	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Paolino	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	35	0	35	57	F	+	-	o
Pearson	o	+	+	o	+	+	-	+	+	43	10	53	77	B	+	-	o
Picard	o	+	+	o	+	+	-	+	+	43	0	43	66	C	+	-	o
Quezada	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	63	0	63	88	A	+	-	o
Raptakis	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	60	0	60	85	B	+	-	o
Satchell	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	o	46	10	56	80	B	+	-	o
Seveny	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
Sheehan	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	o	+	46	0	46	69	C	+	-	o
Sosnowski	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
President Ruggerio	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	49	0	49	73	C	+	-	o
See pages 9 & 10 for methodology and bill summaries													Senate Grade: C-				

2017-2018 Green Report Card Grades: **R.I. State House of Representatives**

Representative	Green Buildings Act H5427	RGGI Extension H5274	Carbon Pricing Study Bill H6305	Enabling Municipal Aggregation H5536	Flame Retardants in Furniture H5082	Protected Land Penalty Increase S7383	Pollinator Working Group H8138	Right of Footway H7978	School Waste Recycling H7699	Municipal Infrastructure Grants H7102	<div> + Voted with ECRI position - Voted against ECRI position o Did not participate in vote </div>				
											Bill Points	Sponsor Points	Raw Total	Curved Grade	Letter Grade
Abney	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Ackerman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Ajello	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Almeida	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Amore	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	o	+	+	64	0	64	74	C
Azzinaro	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Barros	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Bennett	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Blazejewski	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Canario	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Carson	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	o	+	64	20	84	94	A
Casey	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Casmiro	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Chippendale	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	42	0	42	52	F
Corvese	+	o	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	64	-10	64	64	D
Costantino	o	o	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	61	0	61	71	C
Coughlin	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Craven	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Cunha	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	o	64	0	64	74	C
Diaz	+	+	o	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	64	0	64	74	C
Donovan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Edwards	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Fellela	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Filippi	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	42	0	42	52	F
Fogarty	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Girarrusso	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	14	0	14	24	F
Handy	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	40	110	120	A
Hearn	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	o	64	5	64	84	B
Hull	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Jacquard	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	56	-10	46	56	F
Johnston	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Kazarian	o	+	o	o	+	+	o	o	+	o	52	0	52	62	D
Keable	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	20	90	100	A
Kennedy	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	o	+	64	0	64	74	C
Knight	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Lancia	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	28	-10	18	28	F
Lima	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B

See pages 9 & 10 for methodology and bill summaries

2017-2018 Green Report Card Grades: R.I. State House of Representatives

Representative	Green Buildings Act H5427	RGGI Extension H5274	Carbon Pricing Study Bill H6305	Enabling Municipal Aggregation H5536	Flame Retardants in Furniture H5082	Protected Land Penalty Increase S7383	Pollinator Working Group H8138	Right of Footway H7978	School Waste Recycling H7699	Municipal Infrastructure Grants H7102	<div> + Voted with ECRI position - Voted against ECRI position o Did not participate in vote </div>				
											Bill Points	Sponsor Points	Raw Total	Curved Total	Letter Grade
Lombardi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Maldonado	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Marshall	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	67	-20	47	57	F
Marszalkowski	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	56	10	66	76	C
McEntree	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
McKiernan	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
McLaughlin	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	56	0	56	66	D
McNamara	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	-10	60	70	C
Mendonca	+	-	-	-	o	+	+	-	+	+	11	0	11	21	F
Messier	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Morgan	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	14	0	14	24	F
Morin	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Nardolillo	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Newberry	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	o	25	0	25	35	F
Nunes	+	+	-	o	+	+	+	o	-	+	36	0	36	46	F
O'Brien	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
O'Grady	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Perez	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Phillips	o	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	64	0	64	74	C
Price	-	-	-	+	o	+	+	-	+	+	11	0	11	21	F
Quatrocchi	+	-	+	-	o	+	+	-	+	+	25	0	25	35	F
Ranglin-Vassell	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Regunberg	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	67	20	87	97	A
Roberts	-	-	-	-	+	+	o	-	+	+	-3	0	-3	7	F
Ruggiero	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	30	100	120	A
Serpa	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Shanley	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Sherkarchi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	67	0	67	77	C
Slater	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	67	-10	57	67	D
Solomon	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	+	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Tanzi	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	90	A
Tobon	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	10	80	90	A
Ucci	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Vella-Wilkinson	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Walsh	+	o	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	67	0	67	77	C
Williams	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
Winfield	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	o	67	-10	57	67	D
Speaker Mattiello	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	70	0	70	80	B
House Grade:														C+	

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Methodology for Report Card Grades

Vote scores

Vote scores in this Green Report card are based on a variety of ECRI priority and agenda issues that came to major votes in 2017-2018. This analysis considers bills that made it to full votes in both the House and Senate sides. ECRI priority bills that only made it to the floor on one side of the General Assembly were also considered.

Based on individual legislators' floor votes, a "voting rate" was calculated: the percentage of times that lawmaker voted with an ECRI position. Bills on which a lawmaker did not vote—either due to absence or abstention—did not hurt a legislator's overall percentage.

Sponsor points

Additional credit was awarded to legislators who were sponsors on ECRI priority and agenda bills in 2017-2018, regardless of whether the bill made it past committee. Because of the arbitrary nature of which co-sponsorships appear at the top of legislation, no points were awarded or subtracted for co-sponsoring bills that ECRI supported or opposed, respectively. Additional points were given to Representatives Hearn, Ruggiero, and Tanzi for their efforts to shepherd the 2018 Green Economy and Clean Water Bond through the House Committee on Finance. Elected in a special election in April of 2018, Senator Cano's score was pro-rated based on her short time serving in the Senate.

Curving and letter grades

Vote scores have been added to sponsorship points to yield raw scores which have then been "curved" into a standard letter grade distribution. A similar curve is used in the Senate and the House to adjust grades; however, cutoff scores are not typical because calculations were not done on the traditional 100-point scale.

The curved score cutoffs for letter grades are as follows:

85	A	65	C	<60	F
75	B	60	D		

In both the House and Senate, a handful of low outlier scores significantly drove down the mean score, so the final cumulative grade for two chambers was calculated by assigning a numerical value of 10 for each "A" grade, 8 for each "B", 6 for each "C", 4 for each "D", and 2 for each "F". An average of *those* scores was then used to calculate the final cumulative grade for the House and Senate:

The cumulative grade scores are as follows:

9.50-10.00	A	8.00-8.49	B	6.50-6.99	C	<5.50	F
9.00-9.49	A-	7.50-7.99	B-	6.00-6.49	C-		
8.50-8.99	B+	7.00-7.49	C+	5.50-5.99	D		

Using this methodology, the Senate achieved a score of 6.38 for a final grade of C-, and the House achieved a score of 6.67 for a final grade of C-.

Brief Descriptions of Graded Bills

Green Building Act (2017, S952, H5427) - This act would expand the "Green Buildings Act" to include public projects and updates the standards to include LEED for Neighborhood Development, and SITES.

Renewable Energy Growth Program Extension (2017, S112, H5274) - The Distributed Generation Contract program was a successful pilot that was extended into the Renewable Energy Growth program in 2014 (RIGL 39-26.6). This bill extends the REG for an additional 10 years after the 5th program year, with an annual target of 40 nameplate MW for each of the 10-year periods. This will help diversify Rhode Island's energy mix and improve system reliability.

Carbon Pricing Study - EC4 and Resilient RI Act (2017, S108, H6305) - This act would direct the climate change coordinating council to study a carbon pricing program, to incentivize institutions and industry to reduce carbon emissions and would make several other additions to the council's responsibilities.

Enable Municipal Aggregation (2017, S877, H5536) - Municipal aggregation, also known as community choice aggregation, allows a city or town to choose the electricity supplier for residents and businesses within that municipality. It is a model allowing for important energy decisions to be made at the local level rather than by an investor-owned utility or by a for-profit competitive electricity supplier. Current Rhode Island law has too many procedural barriers that prevent town planners from pursuing aggregation.

Flame Retardants in Furniture and Children's Products (2017, S166, H5082) - Prohibits the use of an entire family of chemicals called phthalates, which are known endocrine disruptors and can cause other health issues, from being used in flame retardants that are applied to furniture and children's products.

Increase Penalty for Protected Lands (2018, S2682, H7383) - This act would prohibit encroachment upon open space land and would allow the owner of open space land or the holder of a conservation easement to bring a civil action in superior court to remedy the encroachment of that land, and to recover damages resulting from this encroachment.

Pollinator Working Group (2018, H8138) - This bill is a Resolution requesting that D.E.M. continue to collaborate with the Pollinator Working Group.

Right of Footway (2018, S2758, H7978) - Clarifies that § 34-7-4 ("right of footway denied") applies only to private rights of footway.

School Waste Recycling and Refuse Disposal (2018, H7699) - This act would require schools to comply with composting and recycling laws, would promote the donation of unspoiled nonperishable food by schools and would promote the selection of local food service companies for school food service contracts.

RI Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program (2018, S2239, H7102) - This act would create a municipal infrastructure grant program within the department of administration (DOA) to issue grants and provide assistance for municipal and other public infrastructure projects that support job creation and expansion, housing development and rehabilitation, community development, and for the accommodation of future growth and redevelopment.

Biomass Fuels Eligible for Net Metering (2018, S2652, H8020) - ECRI opposed. The bill would expand the definition of eligible net metering resources by including "eligible biomass fuels".

LOOKING AHEAD

What's next for ECRI priority policies?

Reducing carbon emissions and incentivizing renewable energy will be at the forefront of ECRI activities over the next two years. ECRI will once again champion the passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act, which will provide a framework for establishing and reaching mandatory emissions reduction goals across all sectors of the economy. This effort will be bolstered by support for legislation like Energize RI's carbon pricing bill, the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI), and energy and appliance efficiency incentive bills.

As the Central Landfill nears capacity, ECRI members will also be focused on reducing waste. Several ECRI members have been selected to participate in the Governor's plastics task force, and we will continue to

advocate for effective policies to reduce plastic pollution at its source. ECRI will also support efforts to increase recycling rates and incentivize composting.

We expect to once again see legislation submitted by the City of Providence to monetize its municipal water supply, and ECRI members are committed to ensuring that any deal to this end mandates the preservation and protection of forested buffer areas around the Scituate Reservoir and its watershed and provides for effective public oversight of the managing authority. ECRI also expects to again fend off efforts to allow energy produced by burning biomass fuels to receive net metering benefits.

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The Environment Council of Rhode Island is a coalition of organizations and individuals whose mission is to serve as an effective voice for developing and advocating policies and law that protect and enhance the environment.