

## **Rhode Island Global Warming Solutions Act of 2019 (H-5444)**

The Rhode Island Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) codifies the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals now in state law and makes them mandatory and enforceable. While we have climate goals now, there's no way to ensure we achieve them and no comprehensive plans to reach them. The GWSA will bring Rhode Island in line with the enforceable greenhouse gas emission reductions already in place in neighboring Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Ocean State needs to protect its residents, its economy, and its environment by taking action now to reduce the emissions that are causing climate change.

### **How Does The GWSA Work?**

The GWSA requires the state to develop emissions reductions plans that include measurable, incremental, and enforceable goals for statewide greenhouse gas reductions in five-year increments to meet the existing goals of 45% reduction by 2035 and 80% reduction by 2050.

The GWSA uses existing administrative structures and state agencies to create and implement plans to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The Director of the Department of Environmental Management is the coordinator of the Global Warming Solutions Implementation Office (GloWS Implementation) and is responsible for overseeing compliance with the GWSA.

Implementing Plans are developed with leadership from the Office of Energy Resources (electricity sector), Department of Transportation (transportation sector), and the State Building Commissioner (building sector). The GWSA relies on agency expertise to identify reasonable emissions reduction strategies for each sector; these Plans must consider the costs and benefits of various measures.

### **Who Gets Input On The Implementing Plans?**

The GWSA assures public transparency and good process through the Administrative Procedures Act and the public meetings of the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council and its Science and Technical Advisory Board. There will be numerous opportunities for public input.

### **Why Is The GWSA So Many Pages?**

The core GWSA is relatively brief (11 pages). The length of the overall bill (50 pages) is mostly fine tuning the duties of existing state agencies to achieve the GWSA's purposes.

### **What Can You Do?**

The House Environment Committee is hearing the House GWSA bill (H-5444) on February 28<sup>th</sup> at the Rise of the House (likely after 4:30) in the House Lounge. You can testify in support in person or by submitting a letter. If you cannot make it to the hearing, you can contact your own State Senator and State Representative (find them at <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/>), as well as the Speaker of the House and Senate President, and encourage them to support the GWSA.

## What's in the Global Warming Solutions Act's Thirteen Sections?

**Sections 1-2.** The core Global Warming Solutions Act (pages 1-11): legislative findings and a new chapter of the General Laws, 42-6.3, to be known as the “Rhode Island Global Warming Solutions Act.”

**Sections 3 -12.** Amendments to Existing Statutes (pages 11-49):

Section 3: Amends chapter 23-27.3 “State Building Code” to allow for adopting a code for existing buildings and structures and to make the Building Commission a participating agency in GloWS Implementation with responsibility for the Building Sector implementing plan.

Section 4: Amends chapter 42-6.2 by setting forth the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council’s duties regarding implementation of the GWSA and requiring Scientific and Technical Advisory Board involvement in keeping the mandatory emission reduction targets up-to-date.

Section 5: Amends chapter 42-11 to provide for the Department of Administration support for GloWS Implementation and make statewide planning a participating agency in GloWS Implementation.

Section 6: Amends chapter 42-13 to give the Department of Transportation responsibility for the Transportation Sector implementing plan and to make the Department a participating agency in the GloWS Implementation.

Section 7: Amends chapter 42-17.1 to give the Department of Environmental Management requisite powers for GWSA implementation.

Section 8: Amends chapter 42-140 by making the Office Energy Resources a participating agency in the GloWS Implementation and giving the Office of Energy Resources the requisite powers to promulgate Electricity Sector implementing plan.

Section 9: Amends chapter 42-140.1 to enable the Energy Efficiency and Resources Management Council to develop beneficial electrification plans.

Section 10: Amends chapter 46-12.2 to make the RI Infrastructure Bank a participating agency in the GloWS Implementation with duty to advise that entity and to assist with projects, as appropriate.

Section 11: Amends chapter 39-1 to provide for Public Utilities Commission consideration of beneficial electrification plans.

Section 12: Amends chapter 42-17.1 by creating the Office of Global Warming Solutions Implementation (GloWS Implementation) in the Department of Environmental Management.

**Section 13.** Effective date: upon passage.