Request for Information
To Support the Development of a Scope of Work for
The 2025 Climate Action Strategy

Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to request public input about the development of the State's 2025 Climate Action Strategy. The feedback collected from this RFI will help ensure that the 2025 Strategy is responsive to the needs of Rhode Islanders.

Background

The 2021 Act on Climate (the Act) sets the following mandatory, enforceable climate emissions reductions, as compared GHG emissions in the year 1990:

- 2030 – 45% [1]
- 2040 – 80%
- 2050 – Net-zero

The Act also directs the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) to submit a plan for meeting these reductions to the Governor and General Assembly by December 31, 2025 and every five years thereafter.[2] To meet the mandates, Rhode Island is embarking on a deep decarbonization planning effort. Climate action requires both lowering GHG emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change. This Strategy is focused on the state's effort to decrease GHG emissions, whereas Resilient Rhody is the State's plan for addressing climate change impacts.

The 2025 Climate Action Strategy will build off the State's 2022 Climate Update, which was an update to the 2016 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan. The 2025 Climate Action Strategy will be the state's first comprehensive strategy to identify programs, policies, and pathways so RI can achieve the requirements of the Act. The EC4 will be seeking one or more consultants to assist with the development of the strategy. This RFI will be used to help inform the scope of consultant work for the 2025 Strategy.

Responses

Respondents may answer as many or as few questions as they wish. Responses to this RFI should be submitted online via SmartComment. Respondents must provide their full name, email address, and zip code with their response. Please number your responses corresponding to the questions below.

The deadline to submit a response to this RFI is **midnight** on **June 15th.**

Comments received will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the ideas discussed. A published compilation of comments submitted via SmartComment will be made public after the closure of this RFI; however, responses to individual comments will not be provided.

Requirements for the 2025 Climate Action Strategy

Development of Rhode Island's 2025 Climate Action Strategy is being guided by requirements in the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) and the Act on Climate. In the context of this guidance, the strategy must include the following:

- Greenhouse gas inventory (which is developed annually by DEM).

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[1] The 2019 greenhouse gas inventory shows that statewide net GHG emissions had decreased 19.6% from the 1990 baseline, meeting the Act on Climate's 2020 mandate of a 10% reduction compared to 1990.
[2] R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-6.2-2

- Near-term (2030-2040) and long-term (2050) greenhouse gas emissions projections under various policy scenarios including business as usual and full implementation.
- Development of economy-wide near term and long-term greenhouse gas reduction targets (broad targets are stipulated in the Act on Climate referred to above, but we may be interested in sector-specific limits such as our 100% renewable electricity by 2033 goal).
- Quantified greenhouse gas reduction measures that will meet the reduction targets and address the main emissions sectors. This includes identifying implementing agencies, implementation schedules and milestones, costs, funding sources, and metrics for measuring progress.
- Benefits analysis that quantifies estimates of co-pollutant reductions (PM2.5, NOx, SO_2, VOCs, air toxics) and other benefits associated with greenhouse gas reduction measures. This must also include an analysis of ways to minimize and mitigate potential disbenefits.
- Low-income and disadvantaged communities benefits analysis that focuses on co-pollutant emissions reductions and other benefits (health, economic) to these areas.
- A process for just transition that will redress past environmental and public health inequities, and where interests of those at risk of pollution, displacement, energy burden, and cost can influence the plan.
- Workforce planning analysis that identifies workforce shortages and support for workforce needs including creation of family-sustaining clean energy jobs and development of programs that directly recruit, train, and retain underrepresented populations in those jobs.

Request for Information

The following tasks outline the core elements the EC4 wishes to seek support on for creating the 2025 Climate Action Strategy:

1. Public Engagement
    a. Public participation with communities, businesses, and other stakeholders
    b. Interagency and intergovernmental coordination
2. Scenario Building and Projections
    a. Greenhouse gas emissions reduction projections under various scenarios (including business as usual and full implementation scenarios)
    b. Estimation of greenhouse gas reductions from specific actions and policy measures
3. Analyses
    a. Benefits analysis
    b. Low-income disadvantaged communities analysis
    c. Workforce planning analysis including just transition principles
    d. Macroeconomic/health benefits analysis
    e. Policy analysis
4. Preparation of the Final Report (and associated deliverables)

Public Engagement

Throughout the development of the 2025 Climate Action Strategy, the EC4 would like to enlist the support of a consultant to help agency staff facilitate robust and ongoing engagement with the public.

1. What forms of public outreach and engagement should be conducted?
2. How can we best support community organizations to engage in or help lead these processes?
3. What areas of public engagement and outreach should be led by the state, by the community, by the consultant, or in which areas would you recommend collaboration for optimal results?
4. Which groups should be included, and do you have suggestions for how to include them?
5. What did you like about the stakeholder engagement process for the 2022 Update, or any other public engagement process? What would you like to see improved, and how?
6. How can we ensure that our public engagement process is inclusive and accessible to all?

7. What public engagement methods would you recommend to elevate the voices, perspectives, and needs of low income and disadvantaged communities?

Scenario Building and Projections

The modeling of various greenhouse gas reduction scenarios is useful to show how certain programs, policies, investments, laws, and regulations can impact RI's emissions. Models can be used to determine which mitigation strategies the State should pursue.

8. What type of climate/emissions reductions modeling would you like to see conducted for the 2025 Climate Action Strategy?
9. What do you think was missing from the modeling included in the 2022 Update?
10. Do you have any models, or modeling approaches that you recommend and why?
11. What other modeling factors and considerations should be considered for the 2025 Climate Action Strategy?

Analyses

The following five analyses are being proposed for inclusion in the 2025 Climate Action Strategy: a benefits analysis, a low-income and disadvantaged communities analysis, a workforce planning analysis, a macroeconomic analysis, and a policy analysis.

12. Do you have any suggestions or considerations for any of the five analyses listed above?
13. The benefits analysis will include an examination of co-pollutants (including, NOx, SO_2, PM2.5, VOCs, air toxics). What other types of benefits would you like to see included in this analysis?
14. Would you like to see any additional analyses conducted, and if so, why?
15. Are there any specific stakeholder groups you would like to see engaged in any of the analyses?

Preparation of the Final Report

The EC4 will need to deliver a final report to the Governor, General Assembly and EPA (to meet the requirements of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan referred to above) by late 2025. This final report will be the culmination of all the modeling, analysis, and engagement undertaken in 2024 and 2025 and will help set the state on a path towards meeting the emissions mandates outlined in the Act on Climate.

16. Do you have any suggestions for how to best design and craft the 2025 Climate Action Strategy's final report?
17. How would you like to see the results of the 2025 Climate Action Strategy shared with the public and various groups, beyond just the release of the final report?

General Question

18. Is there anything missing from the outline of tasks that you wish to see added to the scope of work?