



Rhode Island
Department of
Environmental
Management

OFFICE OF AIR RESOURCES

Climate Change and Rhode Island

Rhode Island's Climate Change Actions

Small State, Big Plans

In the next 30 years, Rhode Island will embark on a major effort to tackle climate change. In 2021, Governor McKee signed into law the **2021 Act on Climate (AOC)**, a ground-breaking initiative to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with enforceable targets. The AOC mandated the creation of the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) to create a roadmap for Rhode Island's goals.

DEM and the Act on Climate

The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) will be responsible for reporting the state's GHG emissions on a yearly basis. In addition, DEM will issue a triennial summary. Each summary will detail the state's greenhouse gas emissions by category and provide explanations for accounting methodology. The latest report, published in 2019, explains the 2016 greenhouse gas inventory.



Governor Dan McKee signs into law the **2021 Act on Climate**.
Credit: Climate Change Rhode Island

GHG Emissions Reduction Plans

The EC4 is charged with updating the 2016 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan in 2022. This plan will serve as a roadmap for emissions reduction targets. Additionally, it will build a foundation for the 2025 Climate Strategy, a robust, stakeholder-driven process to implement new policies directed towards the AOC's emission reduction targets.

Previous Rhode Island greenhouse gas inventories can be found on the Office of Air Resource's webpage under 'Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory'

2021 Act on Climate Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Targets

10% below 1990 levels by 2020

45% below 1990 levels by 2030

80% below 1990 levels by 2040

Net-Zero emissions by 2050

Rhode Island's Potential

Little Rhody is home to just 1,214 square miles of land and sea. While the state does not have any economically-viable fossil fuel resources, there are plenty of opportunities for renewable energy development. The state and federal waters beyond Block Island is one of the most promising areas for offshore wind development in the entire United States.



Credit: Rhode Island Sea Grant

In 2016, America's first offshore wind farm came online 3.8 miles south of Block Island. The five turbines helped replace aging diesel generators that previously powered Block Island's power grid. Any excess energy developed is sent to the mainland via underwater cable.

Investing in Low-Emission and Zero-Emission Vehicles

The Ocean State is a section 177 state of the Clean Air Act. Under section 177, the US EPA allows other states to "opt-in" and adopt the State of California's vehicle emission standards. Rhode Island adopted California's Low-Emission Vehicle (LEV) criteria pollutant and greenhouse gas (GHG) and the Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) regulations.



RGGI: A Regional Effort

RGGI is a market-based regulatory program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric power generating units.

RGGI is a cooperative effort among the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia.