AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RESILIENT RHODE ISLAND
ACT OF 2014 - CLIMATE CHANGE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Introduced By: Senators Conley, Sosnowski, Nesselbush, Crowley, and Coyne

Date Introduced: February 01, 2017

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 42-6.2-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-6.2 entitled "Resilient
Rhode Island Act of 2014-Climate Change Coordinating ” is hereby amended to read as follows:

42-6.2-2. Purpose of the council.

(a) The council shall have the following duties:

(1) Assess, integrate, and coordinate climate change efforts throughout state agencies to
reduce emissions, strengthen the resilience of communities, and prepare for the effects of climate
change, including, but not limited to, coordinating vulnerability assessments throughout state
government;

(2)(i) No later than December 31, 2016, submit to the governor and general assembly a
plan that includes strategies, programs, and actions to meet targets for greenhouse gas emissions
reductions as follows:

(A) Ten percent (10%) below 1990 levels by 2020;

(B) Forty-five percent (45%) below 1990 levels by 2035;

(C) Eighty percent (80%) below 1990 levels by 2050;

(D) The plan shall also include procedures and metrics for periodic measurement, not
less frequently than once every five (5) years, of progress necessary to meet these targets and for
evaluating the possibility of meeting higher targets through cost-effective measures.

(ii) The plan shall specifically study the effectiveness of the state and/or multi-state
carbon pricing program to incentivize institutions and industry to reduce carbon emissions. The study shall include the effectiveness of allocating revenues generated from such carbon pricing program to fund enhanced incentives to institutions and industry for targeted efficiency measures; projected emissions reductions; economic impact to businesses; any economic benefits to Rhode Island and impacts to the state's economic competitiveness if the program were implemented.

(3) Advance the state's understanding of the effects of climate change including, but not limited to, sea level rise, coastal and shoreline changes, severe weather events, critical infrastructure vulnerability, and ecosystem, economic, and health impacts, including the effects of carbon pollution on children's health;

(4) Identify strategies to prepare for these effects and communicate them to Rhode Islanders, including strategies that incentivize businesses, institutions and industry to adapt to climate change;

(5) Work with municipalities to support the development of sustainable and resilient communities;

(6) Identify and leverage federal, state, and private funding opportunities for emission reduction and climate change preparedness and adaption work in Rhode Island;

(7) Advise the governor, the general assembly, and the public on ways to ensure that Rhode Island continues to be a national leader in developing and implementing strategies that effectively address the challenges of climate change;

(8) Work with other New England states to explore areas of mutual interest to achieve common goals; and

(9) Identify and facilitate opportunities to educate the public about climate change and efforts throughout state agencies and municipalities to address climate change.

(b) The council is encouraged to utilize the expertise of Rhode Island universities and colleges in carrying out the duties described in subsection (a) of this section, specifically to ensure that the state's efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change are based on the best available scientific and technical information, and to optimize the contribution by the universities and colleges of their expertise and experience in research, analysis, modeling, mapping, applications to on-the-ground situations, technical assistance, community outreach, and public education.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.
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. This act would take effect upon passage.