AN ACT

RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- RHODE ISLAND RESOURCE RECOVERY CORPORATION ARBITRATION

Introduced By: Representatives Carnevale, Ucci, Fellela, Petrarca, and DaSilva

Date Introduced: March 01, 2012

Referred To: House Labor

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Title 28 of the General Laws entitled "LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

CHAPTER 9.8

RHODE ISLAND RESOURCE RECOVERY CORPORATION ARBITRATION

28-9.8-1. Short title. – This chapter may be cited as the “Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation Arbitration Act”.

28-9.8-2. Statement of policy. – (a) The protection of the public health, safety, and welfare demands that the full-time employees of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation of the state of Rhode Island not be accorded the right to strike or engage in any work stoppage or slowdown. This necessary prohibition does not require the denial to such state employees of other well recognized rights of labor, such as the right to organize, to be represented by an organization of their choice, and the right to bargain collectively concerning wages, rates of pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

(b) It is declared to be the public policy of this state to accord to the full-time employees all of the rights of labor other than the right to strike or engage in any work stoppage or slowdown. To provide for the exercise of these rights, a method of arbitration of disputes is established.

(c) The establishment of this method of arbitration shall not, in any way, be deemed to be
recognition by the state of compulsory arbitration as a superior method of settling labor disputes
between employees who possess the right to strike and their employers, but rather is a recognition
solely of the necessity to provide some alternative mode of settling disputes where employees
must as a matter of public policy be denied the usual right to strike.

28-9.8-3. Definitions. – As used in this chapter, the following terms, unless the context
requires a different interpretation, have the following meanings:
(1) Rhode Island resource recovery corporation employees" means the full-time
employees of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation of the state of Rhode Island,
(2) “State authorities” means the proper officials of the state whose duty or duties it is to
establish the wages, salaries, rates of pay, hours, working conditions, and other terms and
conditions of employment of Rhode Island resource recovery corporation.

28-9.8-4. Right to organize and bargain collectively. – The Rhode Island resource
recovery corporation employees shall have the right to bargain collectively with the state of
Rhode Island and to be represented by an organization in the collective bargaining as to wages,
rates of pay, hours, working conditions, and all other terms and conditions of employment.

28-9.8-5. Recognition of bargaining agent. – The organization selected by the majority
of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation employees shall be recognized by the state as
the sole and exclusive bargaining agent or all of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation
employees unless and until recognition of the organization is withdrawn by vote of a majority of
the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation employees. The labor organization or state may
designate any person or persons to negotiate or bargain on its behalf provided, that the person or
persons so designated shall be given authority to enter into and conclude an effective and binding
collective-bargaining agreement.

28-9.8-6. Obligation to bargain. – It shall be the obligation of the state, acting through
state authorities, to meet and confer in good faith with the designated representative or
representatives of the bargaining agent, including any legal counsel selected by the bargaining
agent, within ten (10) days after receipt of written notice from the bargaining agent of the request
for a meeting for collective bargaining purposes. This obligation includes the duty to cause any
agreement resulting from the negotiations to be reduced to a written contract; provided, that no
contract shall exceed the term of three (3) years.

28-9.8-7. Unresolved issues submitted to arbitration. – In the event that the bargaining
agent and the state authorities are unable, within thirty (30) days from, and including the date of
their first meeting to reach an agreement on a contract, any unresolved issues shall be submitted
to arbitration.
28-9.8-8. Arbitration board -- Composition. – (a) Within five (5) days from the expiration of the thirty (30) day period referred to in section 28-9.8-7, the bargaining agent and the state authorities shall each select and name one arbitrator and shall immediately notify each other, in writing, of the name and address of the person selected.

(b) The two (2) arbitrators selected and named shall, within ten (10) days from and after the expiration of the five (5) day period above, agree upon and select and name a third arbitrator. If, on the expiration of the period allowed, the arbitrators are unable to agree upon the selection of a third arbitrator, the chief justice of the Rhode Island supreme court shall select a resident of Rhode Island, or a person whose place of business or principal place of employment is in Rhode Island, as the third arbitrator upon request, in writing, from either the bargaining agent or the state authorities.

(c) The third arbitrator, whether selected as a result of agreement between the two (2) previously selected arbitrators or selected by the chief justice, shall act as chairperson of the arbitration board.

28-9.8-9. Hearings. – (a) (1) The arbitration board shall, acting through its chairperson, call a hearing to be held within ten (10) days after the date of the appointment of the chairperson, and shall, acting through its chairperson, give at least seven (7) days notice, in writing, to each of the other two (2) arbitrators, the bargaining agent, and the state authorities of the time and place of the hearing.

(2) The hearing shall be informal, and the rules of evidence prevailing in judicial proceedings shall not be binding. Any and all documentary evidence and other data deemed relevant by the arbitrators may be received in evidence.

(3) The arbitrators shall have the power to administer oaths and to require by subpoena the attendance and testimony of witnesses, and the production of books, records, and other evidence relative or pertinent to the issues presented to them for determination. (b) The hearing conducted by the arbitrators shall be concluded within twenty (20) days of the time of commencement, and within ten (10) days after the conclusion of the hearings, the arbitrators shall make written findings and a written opinion upon the issues presented, a copy of which shall be mailed or otherwise delivered to the bargaining agent or its attorney or otherwise delegated representative and to the state authorities. A majority decision of the arbitrators shall be binding upon both the bargaining agent and the state authorities.

28-9.8-10. Factors to be considered by arbitration board. – The arbitrators shall conduct the hearings and render their decision upon the basis of a prompt, peaceful, and just settlement of wage or hour disputes between the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation
employees and the state. The factors, among others, to be given weight by the arbitrators in arriving at a decision shall include:

(1) Comparison of wage rates or hourly conditions of employment of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation employees with prevailing wage rates or hourly conditions of employment of skilled employees of the building trades and industry in the state.

(2) Comparison of wage rates or hourly conditions of employment of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporations employees with wage rates or hourly conditions of employment Resource Recovery employees in other states.

(3) Interest and welfare of the public.

(4) Comparison of peculiarities of employment in regard to other trades or professions, specifically:

(i) Hazards of employment;

(ii) Physical qualifications;

(iii) Educational qualifications;

(iv) Mental qualifications;

(v) Job training and skills.

28-9.8-11. Fees and expenses of arbitration. – Fees and necessary expenses of arbitration shall be equally borne by the bargaining agent and the state. Notwithstanding any other remedies which a court appointed arbitrator appointed by the chief justice pursuant to section 28-9.8-8 may have, the arbitrator or a party who has paid its share of the fees and necessary expenses of a court appointed arbitrator may petition the superior court for sanctions against the party failing to make timely payment of its share of the arbitrator’s fees and expenses, and the superior court is authorized to enforce the sanctions against the nonpaying party, including, but not limited to, contempt powers pursuant to section 8-6-1.

28-9.8-12. Collective bargaining contract. – Any agreements actually negotiated between the bargaining agent and the state authorities either before or within thirty (30) days after arbitration shall constitute the collective bargaining contract governing Rhode Island resource recovery employees and the state for the period stated in the agreement; provided, that the period shall not exceed three (3) years. Any collective-bargaining agreement negotiated under the terms and provisions of this chapter shall specifically provide that the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation employees who are subject to its terms shall have no right to engage in any work stoppage, slowdown, or strike, the consideration for the provision being the right to a resolution of disputed questions.

28-9.8-13. Request for collective bargaining. – Whenever wages, rates of pay, or any
other matter requiring appropriation of money by the state are included as a matter of collective
bargaining conducted under the provisions of this chapter, it is the obligation of the bargaining
agent to serve written notice of request for collective bargaining on the state authorities at least
one hundred twenty (120) days before the last day on which money can be appropriated by the
state to cover the contract period which is the subject of the collective bargaining procedure.

28-9.8-14. Writ of certiorari to the supreme court. – The sole avenue of review of a
decision of an arbitration panel issued pursuant to this chapter shall be by petition for writ of
certiorari to the supreme court. In the event a decision of the arbitration panel is sought to be
reviewed by writ of certiorari to the supreme court, the matter shall be given priority by the
supreme court.

28-9.8-15. Attorneys' fees, costs, and interest. – In the event either the bargaining agent
or the state authorities files a petition for writ of certiorari to the supreme court of the state of
Rhode Island for a review or modification of a majority decision of the arbitrators, which by the
provisions of section 28-9.8-9 is binding upon both the bargaining agent and the state authorities,
the party against whom the decision of the supreme court is adverse, if the supreme court finds
the appeal or petition to be frivolous, shall pay reasonable attorneys' fees and costs to the
successful party as determined by the supreme court, and the supreme court shall in its final
decision or judgment award the costs and reasonable attorneys' fees. If the final decision affirms
the award of money, the award, if retroactive, shall bear interest at the rate of eight percent (8%)
per annum from the effective retroactive date.

28-9.8-16. Severability. – If any provision of this chapter, or its application to any person
or circumstances, is held unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the remaining provisions of this
chapter and the application of the provisions to other persons or circumstances, other than those
to which it is held invalid, shall not be affected by the invalidity.

28-9.8-17. Affirmative action provisions. – The commissioners of the Rhode Island
resource recovery corporation shall include proposals for affirmative action provisions as a
subject for all collective bargaining negotiations. The proposals shall include at a minimum, but
not limited to, the following personnel actions: recruitment; new hires; promotions; transfers;
terminations; training and education; layoffs and return from layoff.

SECTION 2. Section 23-19-8 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-19 entitled "Rhode
Island resource recovery corporation" is hereby amended to read as follows:

23-19-8. Employment of executive director and support services -- Books and
records. -- (a) The commissioners shall employ an executive director who shall administer,
manage, and direct the offices and business of the corporation, subject to the policies, control, and
direction of the commissioners. The commissioners may employ technical experts and other
officers, agents, and staff, and fix their qualifications, duties, and compensation. The executive
director and the technical experts, officers, agents, and staff and attorneys so employed shall not
be subject to the provisions of the classified service. The board of commissioners may delegate to
one or more of its agents or employees those administrative duties that it may deem proper to
accomplish its purposes. The corporation may request that the director of the department of
environmental management provide within the department of environmental management
facilities, administrative support, staff services, and any other services that shall be necessary for
the proper performance of the powers and duties of the corporation.

(b) The executive director shall also be the secretary and shall keep a record of the
proceedings of the corporation and shall be custodian of all books, documents, and papers filed
with the corporation and of its minutes, books, and seal. The executive director shall have the
authority to cause to be made copies of all minutes and other records and documents of the
corporation, and to give certificate under the seal of the corporation that the copies are true copies
and all persons dealing with the corporation may rely upon the certificate, except in the case
where a secretary's certificate is required to attest to an action of the executive director, in which
instance the deputy executive director shall have the authority to give certificate under the seal of
the corporation as secretary.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, or any provision of general or
public laws to the contrary, nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prevent full-time
employees of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation from availing themselves of the
provision of chapter 28-9.8, the “Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation Arbitration Act.”

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
AN ACT
RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- RHODE ISLAND RESOURCE RECOVERY CORPORATION ARBITRATION

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1 This act would authorize all full-time employees of the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation to collectively bargain and engage in grievance and interest arbitrations.

2 This act would take effect upon passage.

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