

2021 -- S 0629

=====  
LC002027  
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

—————  
A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS-RENEWABLE ENERGY

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, Euer, Goodwin, McCaffrey, Pearson, Miller, Gallo,  
and DiPalma

Date Introduced: March 17, 2021

Referred To: Senate Commerce

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Sections 39-26-4 and 39-26-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 39-26 entitled  
2 "Renewable Energy Standard" are hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **39-26-4. Renewable energy standard.**

4           (a) Starting in compliance year 2007, all obligated entities shall obtain at least three percent  
5 (3%) of the electricity they sell at retail to Rhode Island end-use customers, adjusted for electric  
6 line losses, from eligible renewable energy resources, escalating, according to the following  
7 schedule:

8           (1) At least three percent (3%) of retail electricity sales in compliance year 2007;

9           (2) An additional one-half of one percent (0.5%) of retail electricity sales in each of the  
10 following compliance years 2008, 2009, 2010;

11           (3) An additional one percent (1%) of retail electricity sales in each of the following  
12 compliance years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, provided that the commission has determined the  
13 adequacy, or potential adequacy, of renewable energy supplies to meet these percentage  
14 requirements;

15           (4) An additional one and one-half percent (1.5%) of retail electricity sales in each of the  
16 following compliance years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, ~~and 2019, 2020 and 2021 and each year~~  
17 ~~thereafter until 2035, provided that the commission has determined the adequacy, pursuant to § 39-~~  
18 ~~26-6, of renewable energy supplies to meet these percentage requirements.~~

19           (5) [Deleted by P.L. 2016, ch. 144, § 1 and P.L. 2016, ch. 155, § 1.]

1           (6) An additional four percent (4%) of retail electricity sales in 2022;

2           (7) An additional nine and one-half percent (9.5%) of retail electricity sales in 2023, 2024,  
3 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029;

4           (8) An additional ten and one-half percent (10.5%) of retail electricity sales in 2030 to  
5 achieve the goal that one hundred percent (100%) of RI's electricity demand is from renewable  
6 energy by 2030.

7           (b) For each obligated entity and in each compliance year, the amount of retail electricity  
8 sales used to meet obligations under this statute that are derived from existing renewable energy  
9 resources shall not exceed two percent (2%) of total retail electricity sales.

10           (c) The minimum renewable energy percentages set forth in subsection (a) shall be met for  
11 each electrical energy product offered to end-use customers, in a manner that ensures that the  
12 amount of renewable energy of end-use customers voluntarily purchasing renewable energy is not  
13 counted toward meeting such percentages.

14           (d) To the extent consistent with the requirements of this chapter, compliance with the  
15 renewable energy standard may be demonstrated through procurement of NE-GIS certificates  
16 relating to generating units certified by the commission as using eligible renewable energy sources,  
17 as evidenced by reports issued by the NE-GIS administrator. Procurement of NE-GIS certificates  
18 from off-grid and customer-sited generation facilities, if located in Rhode Island and verified by  
19 the commission as eligible renewable energy resources, may also be used to demonstrate  
20 compliance. With the exception of contracts for generation supply entered into prior to 2002, initial  
21 title to NE-GIS certificates from off-grid and customer-sited generation facilities and from all other  
22 eligible renewable energy resources, shall accrue to the owner of such a generation facility, unless  
23 such title has been explicitly deemed transferred pursuant to contract or regulatory order.

24           (e) In lieu of providing NE-GIS certificates pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, an  
25 obligated entity may also discharge all or any portion of its compliance obligations by making an  
26 alternative compliance payment to the renewable energy development fund established pursuant to  
27 § 39-26-7.

28           **39-26-6. Duties of the commission.**

29           (a) The commission shall:

30           (1) Develop and adopt regulations on or before December 31, 2005, for implementing a  
31 renewable energy standard, which regulations shall include, but be limited to, provisions for:

32           (i) Verifying the eligibility of renewable energy generators and the production of energy  
33 from such generators, including requirements to notify the commission in the event of a change in  
34 a generator's eligibility status.

1 (ii) Standards for contracts and procurement plans for renewable energy resources to  
2 achieve the purposes of this chapter.

3 (iii) Flexibility mechanisms for the purposes of easing compliance burdens; facilitating  
4 bringing new renewable resources on-line; and avoiding and/or mitigating conflicts with state-level  
5 source disclosure requirements and green marketing claims throughout the region; which flexibility  
6 mechanisms shall allow obligated entities to: (A) Demonstrate compliance over a compliance year;  
7 (B) Bank excess compliance for two (2) subsequent compliance years, capped at thirty percent  
8 (30%) of the current year's obligation; and (C) Allow renewable energy generated during 2006 to  
9 be banked by an obligated entity as early compliance, usable towards meeting an obligated entity's  
10 2007 requirement. Generation used for early compliance must result in the retirement of NE-GIS  
11 certificates in a reserved certificate account designated for such purposes.

12 (iv) Annual compliance filings to be made by all obligated entities within one month after  
13 NE-GIS reports are available for the fourth (4th) quarter of each calendar year. All electric-utility-  
14 distribution companies shall cooperate with the commission in providing data necessary to assess  
15 the magnitude of obligation and verify the compliance of all obligated entities.

16 (2) Authorize rate recovery by electric-utility-distribution companies of all prudent  
17 incremental costs arising from the implementation of this chapter, including, without limitation:  
18 the purchase of NE-GIS certificates; the payment of alternative compliance payments; required  
19 payments to support the NE-GIS; assessments made pursuant to § 39-26-7(c); and the incremental  
20 costs of complying with energy source disclosure requirements.

21 (3) Certify eligible renewable energy resources by issuing statements of qualification  
22 within ninety (90) days of application. The commission shall provide prospective reviews for  
23 applicants seeking to determine whether a facility would be eligible.

24 (4) Determine, on or before January 1, 2019, and every ~~fifth~~ third year thereafter, the  
25 adequacy of renewable energy supplies to meet the increase in the percentage requirement of  
26 energy from renewable energy resources to go into effect the following year. In the event that the  
27 commission determines an inadequacy of supplies for scheduled percentage increases, the  
28 commission ~~shall~~ may delay all or a part of the implementation of the scheduled percentage  
29 increase, until such time that the commission determines that the supplies are adequate to achieve  
30 the purposes of this chapter.

31 (5) Establish sanctions for those obligated entities that, after investigation, have been found  
32 to fail to reasonably comply with the commission's regulations. No sanction or penalty shall relieve  
33 or diminish an obligated entity from liability for fulfilling any shortfall in its compliance obligation;  
34 provided, however, that no sanction shall be imposed if compliance is achieved through alternative

1 compliance payments. The commission may suspend or revoke the certification of generation units,  
2 certified in accordance with subsection (a)(3) above, that are found to provide false information or  
3 that fail to notify the commission in the event of a change in eligibility status or otherwise comply  
4 with its rules. Financial penalties resulting from sanctions from obligated entities shall not be  
5 recoverable in rates.

6 (6) Report, by February 15, 2006, and by February 15 each year thereafter, to the governor,  
7 the speaker of the house, and the president of the senate on the status of the implementation of the  
8 renewable energy standards in Rhode Island and other states, and which report shall include in  
9 2009, and each year thereafter, the level of use of renewable energy certificates by eligible  
10 renewable energy resources and the portion of renewable energy standards met through alternative  
11 compliance payments, and the amount of rate increases authorized pursuant to subsection (a)(2).

12 (b) Consistent with the public policy objective of developing renewable generation as an  
13 option in Rhode Island, and subject to the review and approval of the commission, the electric  
14 distribution company is authorized to propose and implement pilot programs to own and operate  
15 no more than fifteen megawatts (15 MW) of renewable-generation demonstration projects in Rhode  
16 Island and may include the costs and benefits in rates to distribution customers. At least two (2)  
17 demonstration projects shall include renewable generation installed at, or in the vicinity of  
18 nonprofit, affordable-housing projects where energy savings benefits are provided to reduce  
19 electric bills of the customers at the nonprofit, affordable-housing projects. Any renewable-  
20 generation proposals shall be subject to the review and approval of the commission. The  
21 commission shall annually make an adjustment to the minimum amounts required under the  
22 renewable energy standard under this chapter in an amount equal to the kilowatt hours generated  
23 by such units owned by the electric distribution company. The electric and gas distribution  
24 company shall also be authorized to propose and implement smart-metering and smart-grid  
25 demonstration projects in Rhode Island, subject to the review and approval of the commission, in  
26 order to determine the effectiveness of such new technologies for reducing and managing energy  
27 consumption, and may include the costs of such demonstration projects in distribution rates to  
28 electric customers to the extent the project pertains to electricity usage and in distribution rates to  
29 gas customers to the extent the project pertains to gas usage.

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

=====  
LC002027  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS-RENEWABLE ENERGY

\*\*\*

1           This act would increase from three percent (3%) to an additional 4% of retail electricity  
2 sales in 2022 from renewable energy sources; an additional 9.5% of retail electricity sales in 2023,  
3 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029; and an additional 10.5% of retail electricity sales in 2030  
4 to achieve the goal that 100% of RI's electricity demand is from renewable energy by 2030.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

=====  
LC002027  
=====