

2022 -- S 2584

LC004418

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- JUST TRANSITION TO CLEAN ENERGY

Introduced By: Senators DiPalma, Kallman, DiMario, Lombardo, Ciccone, Euer, and McCaffrey

Date Introduced: March 10, 2022

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 42 of the General Laws entitled "STATE AFFAIRS AND  
2 GOVERNMENT" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 140.5

4 JUST TRANSITION TO CLEAN ENERGY

5 **42-140.5-1. Creation of transition office.**

6 (a) In the department of labor and training, there is established a just transition office. The  
7 office shall ensure that workers employed in the energy sector who are displaced due to efforts by  
8 the state and the private sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or transition from fossil fuels to  
9 clean energy have immediate access to employment and training opportunities in clean energy  
10 industries and related fields. The just transition office shall also work with clean energy businesses  
11 to ensure they act as responsible employers to further the state's workforce and economic  
12 development goals. The just transition office shall also work to increase access to employment and  
13 training opportunities in clean energy industries and related fields for residents of frontline and  
14 environmental justice communities.

15 (b) The director of the department of labor and training shall appoint the director of the just  
16 transition office.

17 **42-140.5-2. Advisory committee.**

18 (a) Within the just transition office, there shall exist an eighteen (18) member just transition

1 advisory committee consisting of:

2       (1) The director of the office;

3       (2) The director of the department of labor and training;

4       (3) The chair of the executive climate change coordinating council;

5       (4) A representative of employers in the gas utility sector appointed by the governor;

6       (5) A representative of employers in the electric power generation sector appointed by the  
7 governor;

8       (6) A representative of employers in the renewable electricity sector appointed by the  
9 governor;

10       (7) A representative of employers in the energy efficiency sector appointed by the  
11 governor;

12       (8) A representative of employers in the clean transportation sector appointed by the  
13 governor;

14       (9) A representative of employers in the clean heating sector appointed by the governor;

15       (10) A representative of employees in the gas utility sector appointed by the president of  
16 the Rhode Island AFL-CIO;

17       (11) A representative of employees in the electric power generation sector appointed by  
18 the president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO;

19       (12) Two (2) representatives of employees in the clean energy sector appointed by the  
20 president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO;

21       (13) A representative of employees in the transportation sector appointed by the president  
22 of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO;

23       (14) The president of the Rhode Island Building and Construction Trades Council, or  
24 designee;

25       (15) Two (2) representatives of environmental justice communities appointed by the chair  
26 of the executive climate change coordinating council; and

27       (16) The commissioner of the office of energy resources.

28       (b) The committee shall be tasked with developing a just transition plan for the energy  
29 sector that identifies workers currently employed in the sector by industry, trade, and job  
30 classification, and contains relevant information including, but not limited to, current wage and  
31 benefit packages and current licensing, certification and training requirements. The committee,  
32 through the just transition plan, shall recommend education and training programs to enhance re-  
33 employment opportunities within the energy sector, and services to support dislocated workers  
34 displaced from jobs within the energy sector as a result of emissions-reducing policies and

1 advancements in clean energy technology. The just transition plan shall also recommend actions to  
2 increase opportunities for residents of environmental justice communities to work in clean energy  
3 industries.

4 **42-140.5-3. Just transition plan.**

5 (a) The just transition plan shall include provisions to:

6 (1) Administer climate adjustment assistance benefits that are similar in type, amount, and  
7 duration to federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) benefits available pursuant to 20 CFR  
8 617.20–617.49;

9 (2) Educate dislocated workers, in collaboration with employers of dislocated workers and  
10 relevant labor unions, on re-employment or training opportunities, and how to apply for climate  
11 adjustment assistance benefits;

12 (3) Provide training, cross-training, and re-training to workers displaced by gas  
13 infrastructure loss in the state’s local distribution companies and related businesses;

14 (4) Address the workforce development challenges of the fossil fuel energy sector’s  
15 shrinking workforce over the course of the state’s thirty (30) year transition to a clean energy  
16 economy;

17 (5) Incentivize the hiring of displaced energy sector workers with utilities, clean energy  
18 industries, and related industries;

19 (6) Work with the executive office of commerce and the office of energy resources to  
20 ensure that training and employment opportunities for displaced energy sector workers are included  
21 in their initiatives, incentives, funding opportunities, and projects;

22 (7) Work with the public utilities commission, the department of public utilities and  
23 carriers, and other agencies regulating the energy sector within the state to coordinate just transition  
24 initiatives, complementing the other regulatory priorities of those agencies;

25 (8) Establish a fund to implement the just transition plan and its components, including  
26 potential sources for sustainable short-term and long-term funding;

27 (9) Develop requirements, including the submission of a workforce reduction plan, for  
28 energy sector employers that are closing a facility or significantly reducing their workforces as a  
29 result of efforts by the state or the private sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or transition  
30 from fossil fuels to clean energy; and

31 (10) Increase access to employment and training opportunities in clean energy industries  
32 and related fields for residents of environmental justice communities.

33 (b) Employers described in subsection (a)(9) of this section shall submit a workforce  
34 reduction plan to the office. Workforce reduction plans shall include:

- 1           (1) The reasons for the workforce reduction or facility closure;
- 2           (2) The total number of workers by job classification and by geographic assignment  
3 employed by the employer;
- 4           (3) The total number of workers whose existing jobs will be retained, by job classification  
5 and geographic location;
- 6           (4) The total number of workers whose existing jobs will be eliminated by the workforce  
7 reduction or the closure of a facility, by job classification and geographic location;
- 8           (5) Whether each classification of workers whose jobs are being eliminated will be offered  
9 employment in any other job classification or capacity by the employer; how many employees in  
10 each classification will be offered employment; and whether the replacement employment offered  
11 will provide comparable wages, benefits, and working conditions;
- 12           (6) Whether the employer is offering severance or early retirement benefits to impacted  
13 workers; the value of the severance or early retirement benefits; whether the severance or early  
14 retirement benefits are being provided to all or certain classes of workers; and how many impacted  
15 workers intend to utilize these offerings;
- 16           (7) Whether the employer plans to transfer the work to a separate facility, enter a  
17 contracting agreement for work previously performed by company employees, or otherwise  
18 outsource work previously performed by company employees; and
- 19           (8) Whether the employer is a recipient of loans, grants, tax increment financing, or any  
20 other financial incentive from the state, its independent state agencies, departments, or  
21 corporations, or any municipality within the last five (5) years.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- JUST TRANSITION TO CLEAN  
ENERGY

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1           This act would establish a just transition plan to a green economy by creating and  
2           strengthening a critical support and employment process for displaced fossil fuel workers in the  
3           transition to a carbon free economy. The act would create a just transition office within the  
4           department of labor and training assisted by an eighteen (18) member advisory committee.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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