

2024 -- S 3146

LC006227

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAMS

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, DiMario, and Euer

Date Introduced: June 07, 2024

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island and the world face significant environmental, economic,  
2 energy, and public health challenges from the impacts of climate change; and

3 WHEREAS, Clean, affordable, and reliable electricity is essential for a thriving  
4 competitive business environment and for ensuring the State's long-term economic health and  
5 prosperity; and

6 WHEREAS, Rhode Island law provides "that the state's economy and the health and  
7 general welfare of the people of Rhode Island benefit when energy supplies are reliable and least-  
8 cost"; and

9 WHEREAS, Rhode Island law established a first-in-the-nation goal to meet 100 percent  
10 of Rhode Island's electricity demand with renewable energy by 2033; and

11 WHEREAS, The 2021 Act on Climate established Rhode Island as a national leader in  
12 reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions and requires a transition to cleaner sources of low  
13 and zero carbon power generation in order to achieve net-zero economy-wide greenhouse gas  
14 emissions; and

15 WHEREAS, Renewable energy generation is foundational to achieving 100 percent clean  
16 energy and is foundational to achieving a successful transition to Rhode Island's clean energy  
17 future; and

18 WHEREAS, Many of the State's renewable energy programs were established a decade  
19 ago and designed to jump-start the emerging clean energy industry. This industry is now mature;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, Rhode Island has some of the highest electric and gas rates in the country;

3 and

4 WHEREAS, It is essential that Rhode Island makes informed decisions designed to drive  
5 greenhouse gas reductions while ensuring that policy choices consider affordability and equity as  
6 we transition to a clean energy economy; now, therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby is committed to a just  
8 and equitable clean energy transition which includes delivering renewable energy at lower cost to  
9 families and businesses; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That this Senate is hereby committed to strategic procurements of clean  
11 energy solutions that advance the State's renewable generation and emission reduction goals  
12 while seeking the most cost-effective and efficient solutions for the State's ratepayers; and be it  
13 further

14 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created  
15 consisting of eight (8) members: four (4) of whom shall be members of the Senate, one of whom  
16 shall be a member of the Senate Commission on Environment and Agriculture, one of whom shall  
17 be a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, one of whom shall be a member of the  
18 Senate Committee on Finance, and one of whom shall be a member of the Senate Committee on  
19 Labor, to be appointed by the Senate President; one of whom shall be the Director of the Rhode  
20 Island Department of Environmental Management, or designee; one of whom shall be the  
21 Administrator of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, or designee; one of whom shall be  
22 the Commissioner of the Office of Energy Resources, or designee; and one of whom shall be the  
23 President of Rhode Island Energy, or designee.

24 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study  
25 commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing  
26 authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator.

27 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study of Rhode  
28 Island's renewable energy programs and the impacts to ratepayers including:

29 • Identifying the future needs for renewable energy in Rhode Island's residential and  
30 commercial sectors, including, but not limited to, system sizes, energy production, and energy  
31 demand; and

32 • Providing recommendations to improve the cost-effectiveness and overall cost of the  
33 renewable programs while preserving the economic, environmental and health benefits that  
34 renewable energy provides to the State.

1           Forthwith by August 31, 2024, upon passage of this resolution, the members of the  
2 commission shall meet at the call of the President of the Senate and organize and shall select,  
3 from among the legislators, a chairperson.

4           Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

5           All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,  
6 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or  
7 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

8           The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide  
9 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

10           RESOLVED, That the commission shall develop and submit its recommendations to the  
11 Senate, no later than February 14, 2025, and said commission shall expire on June 30, 2025.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
SENATE RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY RENEWABLE  
ENERGY PROGRAMS

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- 1           This resolution would create an eight (8) member special legislative study commission
- 2   whose purpose it would be to study renewable energy programs, and who would report back to
- 3   the Senate by February 14, 2025, and would expire on June 30, 2025.

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