State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

19-06

July 8, 2019

HEATING SECTOR TRANSFORMATION TO ENSURE RELIABILITY AND PROTECT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

WHEREAS, Rhode Island, along with the rest of the world, faces significant environmental, economic, and public health threats from the impacts of climate change;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island knows that protecting against climate change and continuing to strengthen our economy are complementary goals, and that our efforts to address climate change attract new investment and create jobs, including a 74% increase in clean energy jobs since 2014;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island became one of the first seven states to sign on to the United States Climate Alliance to uphold the principles of the Paris Climate Agreement;

WHEREAS, the Resilient Rhode Island Act established targets for Rhode Island to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 10% below 1990 levels by 2020, to 45% below 1990 levels by 2035, and to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island is on track to meet its 2020 goal due to on-going work to reduce emissions but recognizes that meeting future goals will require continued commitment and new initiatives;

WHEREAS, approximately 35% of Rhode Island's greenhouse gas emissions are emitted due to heating;

WHEREAS, approximately 40% of Rhode Island's total consumption of energy is from heating, including natural gas, fuel oil, propane, biofuels, geothermal and electricity;

WHEREAS, every Rhode Islander deserves access to clean, reliable, and affordable heating for their homes and businesses;

WHEREAS, this past winter's unexpected gas outage on Aquidneck Island highlights the need to reexamine our overall approach to heating;

WHEREAS, lower-income households generally pay a greater share of what they earn to heat their homes;

WHEREAS, identification of new solutions and technologies to reduce heating sector emissions in Rhode Island must include consideration of a broad set of impacts, including, but not limited to, ratepayer costs, public health and safety, and the environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gina M. Raimondo, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) and the Office of Energy Resources (OER) shall lead a Heating Sector Transformation with the goal of reducing emissions from the heating sector while ensuring that Rhode Islanders have access to safe, reliable and affordable heating. The Executive Office of Commerce shall support the DPUC and OER in this effort.

2. The DPUC and OER shall provide the Governor with Heating Sector Transformation recommendations on or about April 22, 2020.

3. The Heating Sector Transformation recommendations shall include, but not be limited to:

   a. Identification of the energy, economic, and environmental opportunities and challenges posed by Rhode Island's heating sector;
   b. Development of a future state framework – through 2050 – for Rhode Island's heating sector highlighting points of intersection across our energy landscape, including the electric sector;
   c. Identification of statutory and/or regulatory barriers to sector transformation and potential solutions to more effectively implement transformative heating solutions;
   d. Opportunities to leverage existing programs and emerging opportunities to deliver lower-carbon heating solutions to Rhode Island households and businesses;
   e. Identification of innovative partnership and new technologies that can provide heat to Rhode Islanders at sustainable economic and environmental levels.

4. The DPUC, OER, and Commerce shall engage key governmental and non-governmental partners, including, but not limited to, the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4), in the development of its work products and prior to offering their recommendations by April 22, 2020.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

So Ordered:

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor