**Governor to Unveil Budget Proposal Tuesday**

Governor Dan McKee will give his State of the State Address Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The address will be televised and should include an outline of his budget priorities for FY2023 which begins in July. The budget is also expected to include the Governor’s proposal for spending the remainder of the federal relief dollars provided to Rhode Island.

**State Releases Electric Vehicle Study and Recommendations**

Last Month the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) released a report entitled, “*Electrifying Transportation: A Strategic Policy Guide for Improving Public Access to Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Rhode Island*.” This report was created to comply with a requirement of legislation passed in 2021. The 91-page report can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://www.energy.ri.gov/documents/Transportation/Electrifying%20Transportation%20Guide%20Dec%202021.pdf>

According to the latest inventory, the transportation sector accounts for 35.5% of Rhode Island’s current greenhouse gas emissions. The heating sector accounts for approximately 33% of emissions. The electric sector accounts for 28.2%; and the remainder comes from “other sources.” In April, 2021, the legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, the 2021 Act on Climate. This law mandates Rhode Island meet specific emission reduction targets. Those targets are: 45% below 1990 levels by 2030; 80% below 1990 levels by 2040; and Net-zero emissions by 2050. This December Report is meant to lay out the initial policies necessary to meet the mandates.

As of December 3, 2021, 4,540 electric vehicles were registered in Rhode Island. Fifty-one (51) percent of electric vehicles registered in Rhode Island are battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and forty-nine (49) percent are plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). Combined, BEVs and PHEVs comprise less than one (1) percent of total light-duty vehicles registered in Rhode Island. While there are zero electric medium-duty vehicles and three (3) electric heavy-duty vehicles registered in Rhode Island as of December 3, 2021, the authors of the report believe these numbers are likely to increase as models become available and prices become more attractive for businesses.

The report lays out the following goals for State agencies in 2022:

* Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council Coordinate - quarterly report outs from agencies on progress and, in coordination with the Division of Motor Vehicles, Office of Energy Resources, and Department of Transportation, develop and maintain a clean transportation dashboard.
* Department of Environmental Management - Lead-by-Example with electric vehicle charging infrastructure at state parks and beaches
* The Office of Energy Resources, in coordination with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Management - prepare an investment strategy and deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure funds allocated to Rhode Island through the federal infrastructure bill (signed by President Biden in November 2021). Investment will align with the recommendations of this Plan, advance equity and accessibility, and follow applicable federal guidelines. In addition, OER will publish a guideline of best practices for public and private charging station installations and continue to work with state agencies to expand the number of electric vehicle ports at public facilities.
* Department of Transportation - Conduct a study on state revenue streams for transportation infrastructure. This study should include a review of alternative revenue generation mechanisms and, in coordination with the Office of Energy Resources and Department of Environmental Management, model changes in revenue based on forecasted adoption of electric vehicles.
* Department of Health - Quantify health benefits of clean transportation investments and identify opportunities to leverage health-based funding streams (e.g., via partnerships with health insurers or providers) to promote electrification of vehicles and mobility equipment in underserved and overburdened communities.
* Emergency Management Agency - As part of its next Evacuation Route study, RI EMA will conduct an internal audit related to charging station access during times of emergency. In this audit, EMA will inventory charging stations along evacuation routes, identify needs for additional charging station infrastructure, and assess the need for mobile or other emergency charging services.
* Department of Labor and Training - Hold industry convenings with electric vehicle charging station developers, auto mechanics, and electricians to understand projected needs and challenges as electric vehicle adoption increases, and to identify potential future training and development opportunities.
* Rhode Island Public Transit Authority Develop a detailed strategy to fully electrify the public bus fleet, including any necessary modifications to RIPTA’s infrastructure, workforce, route planning, or other core aspects of operating a successful public transit fleet.
* Department of Administration - The Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance, in collaboration with the Office of Energy Resources, to develop a charging station maintenance strategy for charging infrastructure on State property and an actionable plan to both right-size and electrify the State fleet.
* Division of Public Utilities and Carriers - Evaluate the costs and benefits of proposals that create an integrated strategy in Rhode Island to support the state’s clean transportation goals with a framework that will consider electric rate impacts, ensure transportation decarbonization benefits, and enable a competitive market and private investment, as well as grid integration
* Division of Statewide Planning - Determine the best way(s) to incorporate vehicle electrification into the State Guide Plan, whether as a separate element or a component of existing elements, and ensure that either this Strategic Policy Guide is adopted as a discrete element or that amendments are made to one or more existing State Guide Plan elements.
* Executive Office of Health and Human Services - In collaboration with other relevant state agencies, inventory state owned fleet vehicles designated for use by the Departments within the EOHHS structure, in cooperation with the State’s plan to transition to electric vehicles.
* Commerce RI - Convene business community representatives and coordinate next steps pertaining to fleet electrification and charging station installation for new and expanding businesses, such as through existing or new programs and support services and targeted outreach. \*\* Point of Contact: Executive Vice President of Business Development
* Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank - Promote deployment of charging stations and electric fleet conversions for private and public entities, with an emphasis on supporting municipal, multi-unit housing, non-profit and commercial properties. RIIB will utilize both existing and new financing and grant programs to accelerate the investment of public and private capital via the Bank’s relationships with state, municipal and private sector stakeholders.
* Coastal Resources Management Council - Assess the extent to which the CRMC has a role in permitting for electric vehicle charging infrastructure; whether the CRMC may weigh non-polluting or zero-emissions marine technology in coastal permitting; and, assess ways in which the CRMC may incentivize zero-emissions transportation activities in the permitting process.

Finally, the report asks the legislature to consider the following actions in upcoming sessions:

* Enact a 100% Renewable Energy Standard to enable transportation sector decarbonization.
* Direct DOT and OER in consultation with DEM to strategically deploy federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act stimulus funding according the priorities herein and in compliance with federal guidance.
* Identify funding to support (and sustain) incentive programs to encourage electric vehicle adoption.
* Consider rights to charge for Rhode Islanders who rent or lease.
* Consider rights to repair electric vehicles and charging stations.
* Consider legislation requiring a minimum number of public parking spots having charging station access.
* Consider passing design and functionality standards for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
* Consider requirements to advance building codes to ready buildings for electric vehicle adoption.
* Provide guidance on sustainable revenue mechanisms to support transportation infrastructure and transit services in an electric transportation

**CHAMBER MEMBER ACTION REQUEST - Preparations for 2022 Session**

T**he Chamber may be calling you, asking for your assistance as we prepare for this new session.** Please go to <https://vote.sos.ri.gov> and click on “Find Your Elected Officials.” Enter zip code and address. Find your “Representative District” legislator and your “Senate District” legislator (if you live in Rhode Island). Email your name and the legislators’ names to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The Chamber will be compiling a database for future grassroots efforts. If you also know a legislator who lives in another district, please send that information to the Chamber as well and we will include it in the database.

**Thank you for your help!**

The following new bills have been filed:

House Bill No. [7013](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7013.pdf) Kennedy, Azzinaro, Edwards, Solomon, Ackerman, Craven, Phillips, Abney, Kazarian, Shanley **ENTITLED,**AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION BY ONLINE MARKETPLACES (Requires high-volume third-party sellers, selling consumer goods on online marketplaces, to provide certain information to the marketplaces and disclose certain information to consumers on product listings.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7013.pdf>

House Bill No. [7016](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7016.pdf) Lombardi, Hull, Cassar, Potter, Felix, Morales, Henries

**ENTITLED,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- COVID-19 PANDEMIC INSURANCE RECOVERY ACT (Allows businesses that had an insurance policy in place for business interruption as of March 9, 2020 or thereafter to recover from their insurance companies for a COVID-19 business impact.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7016.pdf>

House Resolution No. [7022](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7022.pdf) **BY**  Shanley **ENTITLED,**HOUSE RESOLUTION REINSTATING THE LIFE OF AND EXTENDING THE REPORTING AND EXPIRATION DATES OF THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION KNOWN AS THE "RHODE ISLAND ONLINE DATA TRANSPARENCY AND PRIVACY PROTECTION COMMISSION" (Reinstates the life and extends the reporting and expiration dates of the "Rhode Island Online Data Transparency and Privacy Protection Commission" from May 5, 2021, to May 5, 2022, and said commission expires on July 5, 2022.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7022.pdf>

House Bill No. [7060](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7060.pdf) Alzate, McEntee, Caldwell, Lombardi, Carson

**ENTITLED,**AN ACT RELATING TO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES -- RETAIL LICENSES -- HAPPY HOUR (Allows happy hour drink specials served in conjunction with meals prepared on the premises sufficient to constitute breakfast, lunch or dinner, excluding snacks.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7060.pdf>

House Bill No. [7065](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7065.pdf) McEntee, Cortvriend, Speakman, Donovan, Carson, Caldwell, Craven, Morales, Kislak, Ruggiero **ENTITLED,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION ACT (Creates the "Plastic Waste Reduction Act" designed to reduce the use of plastic bags by retail establishments by offering recyclable bag options and providing penalties for violations.) <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7065.pdf>

House Bill No. [7077](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7077.pdf)  Edwards, Fogarty, Bennett, Baginski, Shanley **ENTITLED,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES (Requires that a participant or beneficiary of a health insurance plan incur no greater out-of-pocket costs for emergency services than they would have incurred with an in-network provider other than in-network cost sharing.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7077.pdf>

House Bill No. [7078](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7078.pdf) Edwards, Fogarty, Caldwell, Bennett, Cassar, Filippi, Baginski, Shanley **ENTITLED,**AN ACT RELATING TO INSURANCE -- INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE (Requires a health plan to cover clinically appropriate and medically necessary residential or inpatient services, including detoxification and stabilization services, for the treatment of mental health and substance use disorders.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7078.pdf>