**Last Week at the State House**

All bills reported in last week’s edition (adult marijuana, minimum wage increase, tipped wage increase, local control of minimum wage law) were held for further study.

The full Senate did pass S.2087, An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Environmental Justice Act. S.2087 allows the Division of Statewide Planning to establish Environmental Justice (EJ) areas.  However, 10 residents from an area can request to be declared an EJ area.  At that point the Division would be required to prepare a report (within 6 months) stating why the area should be designated EJ or why an area should be removed from the EJ list.  It doesn't say what happens if the Division does not think the area should be designated EJ.  Following the report, the bill calls for a public hearing within 30 days.  Following the hearing, the Division has 30 to render a final decision which must take into consideration public comment and "community support." To qualify for EJ area status, the area has to have one or more: 1) annual median household income 65% or less of statewide median household income which would be about ($45k); 2) 25% or more residents that are not proficient in English or 3) 25% or more of the population is minority and with annual household median income of less than 150% of state median (about $105k).

Once designated an EJ area, The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) could not issue "any permitted activity" within the area or within a half mile of the area UNLESS 1) applicant prepares an environmental impact report including cumulative impacts; 2) includes adverse impacts that can't be avoided if the permit is granted; and 3) includes public health impacts.  That report has to be given to DEM and DEM must hold a public hearing on the permit.  Then DEM has to wait 45 days before rendering a decision to grant the permit - DEM can deny in less time.  DEM must consider community support when rendering its decision.

It is not clear if the permits only apply to new build requests and to expansion requests, or if it would pull in renewal of permits.  From testimony provided at the hearing, and from various meetings, it appears one of the main focus areas is the Providence Port area.

**This Week at the State House**

**Tuesday, March 22nd**

It is the House Finance Committee’s turn to hear testimony on the adult use of marijuana/cannabis – Tuesday at the Rise in Room 35. The Governor’s proposal, outlined in **Article 11** of his budget proposal provides more authority to the Department of Business Regulation in the governance of the sale of various products. While the House and Senate seem to be aligned in their vision of the program, differences still remain between the General Assembly and the Governor’s office. That said, a bill is expected to pass at some point during the session.

The House Committee on Innovation, Internet and Technology is meeting Tuesday, at the Rise, to discuss a number of bills that are very technical in nature. The full hearing notice can be viewed at: <https://status.rilegislature.gov/documents/agenda-17889.aspx> If your business collects data over the internet in any way, particularly if you share it with a third party, please look at these bills. Personal data includes social security numbers, driver’s license numbers, credit or debit card numbers, health insurance information, or email addresses with any password. **H.7400, An Act Relating to Commercial Law**, requires any business that collects such data and shares it with a third part provider to publicly post (on its website or in a client agreement) the “categories” of information it collects, and name all of the third-party entities with which the information is shared. Failure to make the disclosure results in a fine of $100 - $500 for each disclosure, and may be subject to a private right of action. This bill specifically states that it does not apply to tax-exempt organizations. The Act would take effect January 1, 2023. **H.7564, An Act Relating to Commercial Law**, bans a provider of a digital application distribution platform (iPads, iPhones, etc.) from requiring developers of apps to use a particular in-application payment system for user downloads in order to allow customers to purchase the app. It gives the Attorney General the authority to bring an action in court against the provider as well as allows for a civil action by the app creator. The concern with this bill is the legislature's foray into dictating terms that go into private contracts between business entities.

A bill banning all municipalities from issuing a permit for any commercial, residential or mixed-us buildings unless the building is all-electric, will be heard in the House Municipal Government Committee Tuesday, at the Rise, in the House Lounge. H.7374, An Act Relating to Public Property and Works – All Electric Building Act, does provide relief from the mandate if the project is “physically or technically infeasible” as an all-electric building. Financial considerations are not sufficient to meet the “infeasible” burden. Hospitals, medical facilities, laboratories for biological research and restaurants are exempt. The bill can be viewed at: <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7374.pdf>

**Wednesday, March 23rd**

The Chamber will lend its support to **H.7602, An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government**, which will be heard in the House Corporations Committee Wednesday at 4:00 pm in Room 101. This bill requires the state to notify any licensed business in Rhode Island when substantial changes are made to regulations affecting the business. A business would have the opportunity to sign up for digital or verbal notification of regulatory changes in lieu of receiving notifications by mail.

The following new bills have been filed:

House Bill No. [7985](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7985.pdf) Potter, Alzate, Slater, Diaz, Bennett, Lombardi, Amore, Henries, Morales, O'Brien**,**AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- REBUILD RHODE ISLAND TAX CREDIT (Requires that all entities receiving tax credits from the state pay their workers the prevailing wage or other payments pursuant to § 37-13. This act would also allow the revocation of the tax credits for violation of this act.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H7985.pdf>

House Bill No. [8001](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H8001.pdf) (by request) Carson, Cortvriend, Donovan, Speakman, Edwards, McGaw, Ruggiero, Abney**,**AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW--GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -- FILING OF ASSUMED NAME (Requires individuals transacting business in RI under any assumed name to file in person, by mail, or electronically with the office of the city or town clerk the true or real full name(s) of the person(s) transacting business and their email address.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H8001.pdf>

House Bill No. [8014](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H8014.pdf) Amore, Shanley**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- LABOR DISPUTES (Adds a section to labor disputes that prevents the use of police as harassment in a labor dispute.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/HouseText22/H8014.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2686](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2686.pdf) Cano, Miller, Euer, Quezada, DiMario, Acosta, Mack, Valverde**,**AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION -- SOCIAL COST OF CARBON (Requires the public utilities commission to establish a social cost of carbon and factor it a cost benefit analysis whenever programs are proposed to curb climate change and carbon dioxide emission.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2686.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2688](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2688.pdf) Quezada, Murray, Euer, Cano**,**AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- CONSUMER CREDIT HISTORY EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION ACT -- DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES (Prohibits employers from seeking/using credit reports in making hiring decisions concerning prospective employees, asking questions about the applicant's financial past during interviews or including credit history questions in their job applications.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2688.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2690](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2690.pdf) Kallman, Euer, Miller, DiMario, Mack, Lombardo, Goodwin, McCaffrey, Anderson, Acosta**,**AN ACT RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LICENSING OF HEALTHCARE FACILITIES (Requires all state licensed health care facilities to convert the powering of their operations, from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2690.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2692](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2692.pdf) DiMario, Euer, Coyne, Miller, Kallman, Valverde, Burke, Lawson**,**AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - MULTI-STATE MEDIUM AND HEAVY-DUTY ZERO-EMISSION VEHICLE ACT (Strives to make sales of all new medium and heavy-duty vehicles in the state zero-emissions by no later than 2050.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2692.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2700](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2700.pdf) DiPalma, Euer, Coyne, Kallman, DiMario**,**AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC PROPERTY AND WORKS -- THE GREEN BUILDINGS ACT (Expands definition of public buildings under Green Building Act to include buildings in any subdivision of state, and include private major facility projects; mandates public reports for all such projects.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2700.pdf>

Senate Bill No. [2717](http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2717.pdf) DiPalma, Acosta, Lombardo, Kallman, Euer, Lombardi, Felag**,**AN ACT RELATING TO COMMERCIAL LAW -- GENERAL REGULATORY PROVISIONS -­ DECEPTIVE TRADE PRACTICES (Prohibits certain providers of digital application distribution platforms from requiring that payments for the software application be made exclusively through a particular in-application payment system.)

<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText22/SenateText22/S2717.pdf>