



SECRETARY OF STATE

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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

17-10

September 15, 2017

ACTION PLAN TO STAND UP TO CLIMATE CHANGE

WHEREAS, there is overwhelming evidence and scientific consensus that man-made greenhouse gases are causing an overall rise in global temperatures affecting global climate now and are predicted to have profound effects on global climate in the future;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island, with 400 miles of coastline, is uniquely vulnerable to a changing climate and is already experiencing related effects, including warmer weather and waters, sea-level rise, more intense storms, and flooding;

WHEREAS, Rhode Island is a leader in confronting climate change and extreme weather events, and state agencies and local governments have made significant progress in recognizing and preparing for its impacts, with the enactment of the Resilient Rhode Island Act and the development of tools to identify, quantify, and address anticipated risks;

WHEREAS, the Governor has set bold goals for Rhode Island's clean energy and environmental efforts, including goals to produce ten times as much clean energy and at least 20,000 clean energy jobs by 2020, and has actively supported the completion of the nation's first offshore wind project, Block Island Wind, as well as Rhode Island's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative ("RGGI") and the United States Climate Alliance, which upholds the Paris Climate Accord;

WHEREAS, there is established within the executive branch of State government the Rhode Island Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (the "Council"), which is comprised of officials from state agencies with responsibility and oversight relating to climate change and extreme weather events;

WHEREAS, the Council is specifically charged with identifying strategies to prepare Rhode Island's residents, economy, and habitats for the effects of sea level rise, coastal and shoreline change, severe weather events, and critical infrastructure vulnerability;

WHEREAS, the Council produced a preliminary action plan aimed at accelerating the State's adoption of proactive, practical and positive approaches to resiliency to address the realities and uncertainties of climate change and build on the work currently being implemented within State government; and

WHEREAS, State agencies and municipalities must more effectively coordinate action, priorities, and funding through a statewide Action Plan to Stand Up to Climate Change;

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. There is hereby established the State Chief Resiliency Officer who shall be tasked with driving climate resiliency efforts across the State, both in government and in collaboration with business, academic, and nonprofit partners.
2. The Chief Resiliency Officer, in collaboration with the Council, shall develop a statewide Action Plan to Stand Up to Climate Change (the "Plan") and submit the Plan to the Governor by July 1, 2018. The Plan shall recommend key actions to make Rhode Island's residents, economy, infrastructure, health system, and natural resources more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
3. The Plan shall be based on best available science and data and developed through a comprehensive stakeholder input process.
4. The Plan shall identify and prioritize actions to enhance the State's resiliency to climate change. Examples may include, but are not limited to:

A. Community resilience

- a. Identifying strategies for homeowners and businesses to retrofit properties to make them more resilient to future severe weather and flooding;
- b. Collaborating with the insurance industry to consider incorporating climate change adaptation strategies on insurance coverage and availability, and identifying strategies to minimize private and National Flood Insurance Program insurance costs;
- c. Expediting proactive vulnerability assessments of at-risk geographic areas, populations, and economic sectors;
- d. Increasing statewide awareness by developing model adaptation strategies for municipalities and property owners;
- e. Creating a coordinated and cohesive climate change communication strategy and outreach strategy;
- f. Conducting and supporting public education and training about climate change, resilience, and the benefits of green infrastructure;
- g. Ensuring health equity as Rhode Island's conditions change; and
- h. Utilizing a social equity lens to help inform the vision, goals, and actions of the Plan.

B. Economic resilience

- a. Employing public and private sector leadership and expertise to identify and develop economic opportunities associated with developing greater resiliency;
- b. Identifying the State's capital, business, health care and natural resource assets vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events;
- c. Proposing model adaptation strategies to protect the State's key capital, business, and health care assets vulnerable to extreme weather events;
- d. Identifying and evaluating short, medium and long-term resiliency options to protect the State's critical infrastructure (e.g., ports) from climate change and storm damage and ensure continuity of essential operations during recovery; and
- e. Increasing disaster preparedness and business continuity for small businesses through financial incentives.

C. Critical infrastructure and environmental resilience

- a. Evaluating critical infrastructure and key resources such as drinking water, natural resources, wastewater treatment, waste management,

transportation, energy (e.g., liquid fuels, electric power), healthcare, and education; assessing a full range of hazards and severity of risks both immediately pressing and anticipated to emerge in the future;

- b. Developing adaptation strategies for critical infrastructure and natural resources (e.g., drinking water, wastewater treatment, waste management, transportation, energy, waterways, ports, recreational areas, healthcare, and education);
- c. Developing a demonstration project that will illustrate the principles of resilient infrastructure (e.g., managing their dependencies and interdependencies) and serve as a model for future projects;
- d. Developing a methodology for increasing the resilience of existing and future built and natural infrastructure systems and incorporating into capital and operating investments, maintenance, and operations; and
- e. Identifying strategies to integrate green infrastructure into risk reduction, resilience planning, and decision making.

D. Implementation program

- a. Developing a prioritized list of resiliency actions and investments;
- b. Determining a phased timeline for achieving resiliency actions and investments;
- c. Identifying funding sources and financing strategies and forming key partnerships in order to implement resiliency actions and investments;
- d. Conducting a comprehensive review and revision of State Guide Plans, local Community Comprehensive Plans, and local assessments to identify and address opportunities for key resiliency policies or actions;
- e. Identifying key actors to assume responsibility for each resiliency action and investment; and
- f. Facilitating coordination and collaboration within the State and with private and nonprofit sectors in order to achieve desired outcomes.

E. Lead by example

- a. Developing a transparent and collaborative implementation strategy;
- b. Establishing a framework for State agencies to assess the vulnerability of assets to climate change and extreme weather events and identify adaptation options;
- c. Designating State agency resiliency coordinators for each agency that participates in the Council to serve as the agency's point of contact regarding resiliency efforts;

- d. Identifying and seeking to remove or reform barriers that discourage investments or other actions to increase the State's resiliency to climate change and extreme weather events while ensuring continued protection of public health and the environment; and
 - e. Identifying and incorporating resiliency action strategies in capital asset management process to protect the State's key assets from climate change and extreme weather events, including establishing a process to ensure that the State considers resiliency requirements before making major new capital investments.
5. The Chief Resiliency Officer, in collaboration with the Council, shall manage and coordinate the State's resiliency implementation efforts amongst federal, state, and local levels of government.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

So Ordered:



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Dated: Sept-15, 2017.