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ECRI DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED BY SPEAKER MATTIELLO’S INACCURATE REMARKS ABOUT THE CLIMATE CRISIS

PROVIDENCE (January 17, 2020) – The Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) today expresses deep disappointment with the remarks made by Speaker Nicholas Mattiello in response to a question about the climate crisis at Wednesday night’s Boston Globe forum.

The Globe’s Dan McGowan asked the Speaker about “what measures [he could] take to address the climate challenge here [in Rhode Island].” In response, Speaker Mattiello said: “There’s nothing Rhode Island can do to address climate change in a way that’s real or impactful... This is a national issue. The fifty-square foot State of Rhode Island cannot positively – or negatively – impact the environment.”

“The climate crisis will effect everything from our economy to public health, and we are already seeing these impacts take hold,” said Priscilla De La Cruz, the president of the Environment Council of Rhode Island. “For the Speaker to claim that nothing can be done by state government to reduce the risks to Rhode Islanders is inaccurate. Most of all, we dispute his assertion that state-level actions will only harm the local economy. That is just wrong. Reducing fossil fuel usage in favor of renewable energy has been proven to be good for job creation and for consumers.”

“We need to make emission reductions across all sectors of our economy,” added Kai Salem, ECRI vice-president for policy. “The sector with the highest emissions is transportation and that has to be addressed. We should also make every building more efficient. And we need to make sure the most vulnerable among us are protected from climate change and have opportunities to benefit from the shift from fossil fuels to clean energy.”

“In addition to reducing emissions, we also need to be preparing our state for climate change,” said Meg Kerr, senior director of policy at Audubon Society of Rhode Island and past president of ECRI. “Investing in climate resilience will not only protect our communities and shorelines, it will also grow our economy. But this will require leadership from policymakers at every level of government– local, state, and federal. There’s no excuse for Rhode Island to watch from the sidelines. We need to step up and do our part because Rhode Islanders will also suffer the consequences of inaction.”
De La Cruz added: “While we are disappointed in the Speaker's comments, we are happy to work with him and the legislature to come up with effective solutions to fend off the worst effects of the climate crisis, protect our shorelines and neighborhoods, and sustainably grow our economy.”

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About the Environment Council of Rhode Island

The Environment Council of Rhode Island is a coalition of organizations and individuals whose mission is to serve as an effective voice for developing and advocating policies and laws that protect and enhance the environment. [www.environmentcouncilri.org](http://www.environmentcouncilri.org)