

2016 -- S 3007

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LC006020
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL AND THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT STREAMLINE THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR AQUACULTURE AND IDENTIFY AREAS SUITABLE FOR AQUACULTURE

Introduced By: Senator V. Susan Sosnowski

Date Introduced: May 19, 2016

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

1 WHEREAS, The aquaculture industry is an integral component of the local seafood
2 market in Rhode Island and vitally important to our state economy. The 2015 Aquaculture in
3 Rhode Island Report issued by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) illustrates
4 the growth of the aquaculture industry in Rhode Island, citing increases in the number of farms,
5 area under cultivation, consumption and the number of farm workers employed; and

6 WHEREAS, In 2015, the farm gate value (the value for the product paid to the farmer) of
7 the state's aquaculture products increased 7 percent, from just over \$5 million in 2014 to \$5.4
8 million; the number of farms increased from 55 to 61, with a total of 241.38 acres farmed; six
9 new farms were permitted, including the state's first shellfish hatchery; and the number of
10 aquaculture farm workers also increased 20 percent, from 142 to 171; and

11 WHEREAS, In 2015, oysters remain the aquaculture product of choice in the state, with
12 more than 8.2 million sold for consumption, an increase of 725,040 from last year; and oyster
13 seed sales from Rhode Island aquaculturists were valued at \$162,500; and

14 WHEREAS, The Coastal Resources Management Council is the management agency
15 responsible for issuing permits for aquaculture farms; and

16 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) is
17 required to provide recommendations or opinions on pending aquaculture permit applications
18 before the permit can be approved by CRMC. Recommendations and opinions provided by

1 RIDEM are based upon their assessment of the environmental impact the proposed aquaculture
2 venture will have on existing ecosystems; and

3 WHEREAS, CRMC and RIDEM have been successful making coordinated decisions
4 about shellfish harvesting, shellfish restoration, and shellfish aquaculture under the Rhode Island
5 Shellfish Management Plan since 2014. The plan implementation governing the collaborative
6 efforts between the CRMC and RIDEM has been described as being very valuable in regulatory
7 reform, guiding research projects, and for outreach and education; and

8 WHEREAS, A Lean Government process is a production approach and set of methods
9 that seeks to eliminate all non-value added activity from a process. RIDEM has had a Lean
10 Government initiative in place since 2012, however, this initiative has yet to be applied to the
11 aquaculture permitting process; and

12 WHEREAS, Implementing a Lean Government process defining the continuance of
13 collaborative efforts between the CRMC and RIDEM in the aquaculture permit approval process
14 will build upon the success of the Shellfish Management Plan; and

15 WHEREAS, In addition to a Lean Government process, spatial planning and mapping
16 has been identified as reducing cumulative impacts of many farms and ensuring that aquaculture
17 stays within the surrounding ecosystem's carrying capacity; now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
19 hereby respectfully requests that the CRMC and RIDEM, through continued collaboration,
20 complete a Lean Government process to increase the efficiency of the aquaculture permit
21 application process and, no later than January 1, 2017, recommend to the Senate President and the
22 Chair of the Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture statutory and regulatory changes
23 to streamline the aquaculture permitting process; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby respectfully requests that the CRMC and RIDEM
25 conduct a comprehensive mapping process to identify areas that are appropriate and suitable for
26 aquaculture; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
28 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Director of the Coastal Resources
29 Management Council and the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental
30 Management.

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