

**2012 -- S 2640 SUBSTITUTE A**

=====  
LC02097/SUB A  
=====

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND**

**IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012**

**SENATE RESOLUTION**

**CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION  
TO STUDY PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM PHARMACEUTICAL HUMAN WASTE  
CONTAMINATION IN THE WATER SUPPLY**

Introduced By: Senators Tassoni, Doyle, Gallo, and Sosnowski

Date Introduced: March 01, 2012

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1           WHEREAS, A 2002 study by the United States Geological Survey conducted across 30  
2 states found that 80 percent of water streams sampled had measurable concentrations of  
3 prescription and nonprescription drugs, steroids, and reproductive hormones; and

4           WHEREAS, Many drugs, particularly cytotoxic agents used in the treatment of cancers  
5 such as chemotherapy, have no safe exposure limit, are carcinogenic, mutagenic, and  
6 teratogenic, and remain active and dangerous long after leaving the human body through waste;  
7 and

8           WHEREAS, In some instances, over 90 percent of a utilized drug fails to be absorbed by  
9 the human body and is excreted through waste into the water supply; and

10          WHEREAS, The federal Occupation Safety and Health Administration, the  
11 Environmental Protection Agency, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have each  
12 publically expressed concern with the handling and/or disposal of pharmaceuticals, particularly  
13 cytotoxic agents; and

14          WHEREAS, Even with effective collection and treatment systems, medical waste  
15 incinerators are not capable of destroying cytotoxic chemicals and no methods are currently  
16 available to sewer treatment facilities to neutralize such chemicals; and

17          WHEREAS, Despite these limitations, effective methods of collecting, reducing, and  
18 neutralizing drugs, and rendering them safe for disposal, exist and should be fully explored and  
19 considered; now, therefore be it

1           RESOLVED, That a Special Legislative Commission be and the same hereby is created  
2 consisting of seven (7) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the Senate, not more  
3 than two (2) of whom shall be from the same political party, to be appointed by the President of  
4 the Senate; one of whom shall be the Director of the Department of Health, or designee; one of  
5 whom shall be the Director of the Department of Environmental Management, or designee; one  
6 of whom shall be the Director of the Department of Human Services, or designee; and one of  
7 whom shall be the Rhode Island Attorney General, or designee.

8           In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory  
9 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly  
10 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu  
11 of a legislator, provided that the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader of the political party  
12 which is entitled to the appointment, consents to the member of the general public.

13           The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and provide  
14 recommendations regarding potential public health threats resulting from pharmaceutical,  
15 medical, and human waste contamination in the public water supply and appropriate collection  
16 methods to prevent such contamination. Said study shall include, but not be limited to:

17           (1) A comprehensive review of methods currently used in this state by consumers, health  
18 care providers, and others for disposing of unused pharmaceuticals so that they do not enter the  
19 wastewater system;

20           (2) A review of programs and systems developed in other local, state, and national  
21 jurisdictions for disposing of unused pharmaceuticals so that they do not enter the wastewater  
22 system;

23           (3) Recommendations regarding the development of public education and outreach  
24 program concerning the proper disposal of unused medications, including but not limited to, the  
25 requirement that all physicians, pharmacists, or other health care professionals licensed in the  
26 state of Rhode Island and authorized to prescribe and/or administer chemotherapy treatment  
27 provide written notice to each patient undergoing such treatment as to the hazards posed to  
28 patients and their families in the residential setting of excreted human waste;

29           (4) Recommendations, if necessary, regarding statutory and/or regulatory changes to  
30 current processes concerning pharmaceutical and contamination of our water supply, including  
31 the development of sufficient collection methods whereby patients can safely collect and contain  
32 potentially hazardous excreted bodily wastes for a period of time to be defined by the licensed  
33 prescribing practitioner based on the relevant FDA label(s); and

34           (5) The potential costs of and recommendations regarding how to finance, such a

1 program.

2           Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at  
3 the call of the President of the Senate. Two co-chairs of the commission shall also be selected by  
4 the Senate President.

5           Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

6           The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

7           All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information,  
8 documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or  
9 desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

10           The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide  
11 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

12           RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the  
13 Senate no later than March 5, 2013, and said commission shall expire on May 31, 2013.

=====  
LC02097/SUB A  
=====

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
SENATE RESOLUTION  
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION  
TO STUDY PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS FROM PHARMACEUTICAL HUMAN WASTE  
CONTAMINATION IN THE WATER SUPPLY

\*\*\*

- 1           This resolution would create a seven (7) member special legislative study commission
- 2 whose purpose it would be to study public health threats from pharmaceutical human waste
- 3 contamination in the water supply, and who would report back to the Senate no later than March
- 4 5, 2013, and whose life would expire on May 31, 2013.

=====  
LC02097/SUB A  
=====