

2012 -- S 2871

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT TO ESTABLISH A RHODE ISLAND ARTIFICIAL REEF PROGRAM

Introduced By: Senator John J. Tassoni

Date Introduced: April 12, 2012

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

1 WHEREAS, In the past, the United States has used unneeded ships as targets for military
2 exercises known as sinking exercises; and

3 WHEREAS, Now the United States has devised an alternative means of disposing of
4 obsolete ex-military vessels that allows the vessels to serve in a productive capacity for fifty years
5 past their intended use; and

6 WHEREAS, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 allows
7 appropriate obsolete ships to be donated for use as artificial reefs, which not only promotes
8 marine life and fishing, but also relieves pressure on natural ocean bottom features and reefs; and

9 WHEREAS, The United States Maritime Administration (MARAD) will coordinate the
10 federal agency solicitation and application for obtaining the vessels for use as artificial reefs; and

11 WHEREAS, The donation and transfer application for all ex-military and MARAD ships
12 available for use as artificial reefs may be submitted only by states, commonwealths, and
13 territories and possessions of the United States, or municipal corporations or political
14 subdivisions thereof; and

15 WHEREAS, The placements in Florida waters of the U.S.S. Spiegel Grove in 2002 and
16 the U.S.S Oriskany in 2006, and the U.S.S. General Hoyt S. Vandenberg in 2009 have already
17 provided substantial economic and ecologic benefit to the state, communities, and businesses in
18 the proximity of the placements; and

19 WHEREAS, Each state within the United States with active Reefing Programs using ex-

1 military, MARAD, and other ships available for use as artificial reefs, formally reports marked
2 increases in permanent job creation and increased tax revenues through ecotourism, global media
3 attention, television productions, documentaries, and supporting industries; and

4 WHEREAS, Since 1984, the New Jersey Bureau of Marine Fisheries has been involved
5 in an intensive program of artificial reef construction and biological monitoring, which includes
6 15 artificial reef sites. This network of artificial reefs provides a hard substrate for fish, shellfish
7 and crustaceans, fishing grounds for anglers, and underwater structures for scuba divers; and

8 WHEREAS, Rhode Island has defined Marine recreation in the Ocean Special Area
9 Management Plan (SAMP), a collection of locations open to the public in Rhode Island and that
10 includes four themes: Marine Recreation in the SAMP area; Cruise Ship Tourism, Recreational
11 Activities Adjacent to the SAMP area; Cruise Ship Tourism, Recreational Activities Adjacent to
12 the SAMP area; and Economic and Non-Market Value of Recreation and Tourism in the SAMP
13 area. This resolution would add a new, fifth theme to the Ocean Special Area Management Plan,
14 a vessel Artificial Reef theme; and

15 WHEREAS, The program provides a practical option for disposing of obsolete vessels in
16 a cost-effective and environmentally sound manner that can continue to promote ecotourism
17 associated with recreational diving and fishing in Rhode Island; now therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
19 respectfully requests the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to
20 adopt regulations regarding the placement of vessels in state waters to form artificial reefs and
21 development of a pilot program for the preparation and deployment of a specified obsolete vessel
22 in Rhode Island waters to serve as a model for the development of procedures for the placement
23 of such vessels in Rhode Island waters; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That this Senate respectfully requests the DEM to establish a pilot program
25 for the preparation and deployment of obsolete ex-military, MARAD, or other vessels in the
26 waters of Block Island Sound and shall, by January 1, 2014, and each year thereafter for a period
27 of five years, provide to the governor, the president of the senate, and the speaker of the house of
28 representatives an annual report on the success and outcomes, funding, and recommendations as
29 to whether the pilot program shall be continued, terminated, or expanded; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he hereby is authorized and directed to
31 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Governor and the Director of the Rhode
32 Island Department of Environmental Management.

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