RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE RHODE ISLAND RESOURCE RECOVERY CORPORATION CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF PLASTICS RECYCLING

Introduced By: Senators Miller, Coyne, Kallman, Euer, and Cano

Date Introduced: March 10, 2022

Referred To: Senate Environment & Agriculture

WHEREAS, Rhode Island is blessed with the beautiful Narragansett Bay, hundreds of miles of scenic coastline, dozens of islands, and hundreds of bodies of water including rivers, ponds, and lakes; and

WHEREAS, These treasured Rhode Island resources are facing a continuous and growing threat from plastic pollution; and

WHEREAS, Plastic pollution is dangerous to the health of our oceans and ocean species, contributes to climate change, and is a major component of unsightly litter both on our lands and in our waters; and

WHEREAS, Plastics that enter the marine environment break down through wave action and sunlight into smaller pieces called microplastics, which can be ingested by marine life, putting Rhode Island’s fishing industries and aquatic ecosystems at risks; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby respectfully requests the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) to conduct a comprehensive study to support expansion of markets for recycled materials; and if a market for recycled single stream does not exist, to support implementation of a bottle redemption program comparable to a program currently operating in the region. This study shall include:

1. A summary of Rhode Island’s current requirements for plastics recycling;

2. Estimates of the proportionate volume of plastics recycled versus plastics disposed of in landfills in Rhode Island;
3. Available information on the fate of plastics collected for recycling in Rhode Island;
4. An analysis of plastics generation by type and current method of disposal;
5. Information regarding recycling markets including in-state recycling, and national and international markets;
6. A review of current initiatives in neighboring states to reduce plastics pollution and additional financial and market tools that may be employed;
7. An analysis of the ways and means to enhance the development and expansion of markets for post-consumer recycled plastic, including state and local purchasing and procurement practices;
8. A study of the costs and practicality of new recycled content technologies, including successful approaches to recycled plastic materials development employed by other states;
9. An analysis of the trends in new plastics being developed, opportunities for reduction and recycling, and market development;
10. Recommendations for market-based recycling opportunities for plastics;
11. Recommendations for incentives for expanded in-state end uses for plastics; and
12. A plan to implement a bottle redemption program in Rhode Island within two years;

RESOLVED, That this Senate hereby requests the RIRRC to report its findings and recommendations to the Senate on or before January 10, 2023; and be it further
RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation.

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