

2024 -- H 7731

=====
LC005263
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CREATING A LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS
AND SOLUTIONS

Introduced By: Representatives Cortvriend, Carson, Boylan, Speakman, McGaw,
Fogarty, Kislak, Handy, Azzinaro, and Kennedy

Date Introduced: February 28, 2024

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

1 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island faces significant challenges due to climate
2 change, including increased frequency of storms, riverine flooding, sea level rise, property losses
3 and loss of natural resources including beach erosion; and

4 WHEREAS, These challenges pose serious economic threats to the State, including loss
5 of property taxes, increased stormwater management costs, and potential damage to
6 infrastructure; and

7 WHEREAS, It is imperative to thoroughly examine the impacts of climate change on the
8 State and explore potential solutions to mitigate these impacts; now, therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created
10 consisting of seventeen (17) members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the House of
11 Representatives, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be appointed by the
12 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a Rhode Island Department of Environmental
13 Management Officer, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the
14 Director of Statewide Planning, or designee; one of whom shall be the Director of Coastal
15 Resources Management Council, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the Coastal
16 Resilience and Extension Coastal Resources Center & RI Sea Grant, to be appointed by the
17 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a member from the RI Coastal Institute, to be
18 appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Director of the Institute at
19 Brown for Environment and Society, or designee; one of whom shall be a representative from the

1 Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom
2 shall be a representative from the RI Rivers Council, to be appointed by the Speaker of the
3 House; one of whom shall be a Tax Assessor from a coastal community, to be appointed by the
4 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the League of Cities &
5 Towns, or designee; one of whom shall be a member of the Rhode Island Society of
6 Environmental Professionals, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be
7 a member of the Environmental Business Council of New England/RI, to be appointed by the
8 Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be a member of the RI Realtors Association, to be
9 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and one of whom shall be a member of the RI Builders
10 Association, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House.

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

16 The purpose of said commission shall be to conduct a comprehensive study on the issues
17 confronting the State of Rhode Island due to climate change including, but not limited to:

- 18 • Sea level rise and its impacts on coastal municipalities;
- 19 • Riverine flooding and its effects on inland areas and municipalities;
- 20 • Beach erosion and its economic consequences;
- 21 • Loss of property taxes and other revenue streams;
- 22 • Increased costs associated with stormwater management;
- 23 • Infrastructure vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards;
- 24 • Funding mechanisms for implementation of resilience programs;
- 25 • Impact on waterfront property and business owners; and

26 In addition, the Commission shall examine various adaptation and mitigation strategies,
27 including:

- 28 • Beach nourishment projects;
- 29 • Shoreline hardening measures;
- 30 • Managed retreat policies;
- 31 • Implementation of green infrastructure solutions;
- 32 • Collaboration with federal and municipal agencies to address climate-related
33 challenges; and

34 The Commission shall conduct public hearings and solicit input from stakeholders

1 including, but not limited to: government agencies, environmental organizations, business
2 associations, academic institutions, and community groups.

3 The Commission shall analyze the economic, environmental, and social implications of
4 different adaptation and mitigation and resilience strategies, considering both short-term and
5 long-term impacts, and explore how Rhode Island should administratively organize to meet the
6 full scope of the challenge.

7 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
8 the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson.

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

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

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

14 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters
15 for said commission; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the commission shall prepare a comprehensive final report outlining
17 its findings, conclusions, and recommendations for legislative action to the Speaker of the House
18 of Representatives no later than January 5, 2025, and said commission shall expire on March 5,
19 2025, and said report shall be made available to the public and relevant stakeholders through the
20 official website of the Rhode Island House of Representatives.

=====
LC005263
=====

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
HOUSE RESOLUTION
CREATING A LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS
AND SOLUTIONS

1 This resolution would create a seventeen (17) member special legislative study
2 commission whose purpose it would be to conduct a comprehensive study on the issues
3 confronting the State of Rhode Island due to climate change, and who would report back to the
4 Speaker of the House no later than January 5, 2025, and whose life would expire on March 5,
5 2025.

=====
LC005263
=====