

2024 -- H 8003

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LC004564
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND COASTAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (CRMC)

Introduced By: Representatives McEntee, Caldwell, Handy, Finkelman, Casimiro,
Edwards, Fogarty, Tanzi, McGaw, and Spears

Date Introduced: March 05, 2024

Referred To: House Finance

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island is officially nicknamed the "Ocean State" and has a tidal
2 shoreline on Narragansett Bay and the Atlantic Ocean of approximately 420 miles and
3 approximately 50 miles of south facing coastlines and beaches; and

4 WHEREAS, Rhode Island has eight state beaches: Charlestown Breachway, East Beach
5 in Charlestown, East Matunuck in South Kingstown, Misquamicut in Westerly, Roger Wheeler,
6 Scarborough North and South, Salty Brine in Narragansett, and also includes several ocean-facing
7 municipal beaches; and

8 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's coastal zone management policies recognize that the south
9 facing ocean coastline is subjected to high energy coastal erosion processes, including storm
10 surge and large waves during tropical and extra-tropical storms (i.e., hurricanes and Nor'easters).
11 These processes erode the beaches, dunes and glacial headland bluffs along this shoreline. The
12 eroded sediment is transported along the shoreline into the coastal lagoons, across the shoreline
13 on to the back barrier and low-lying headland areas, and offshore where it may or may not return
14 to the shoreline; and

15 WHEREAS, These natural processes are constantly rearranging and reforming these
16 familiar coastal features along this entire ocean facing coastline, yet as evidenced by the recent
17 storms of December 2023 and January 2024, erode in response to these storms; and

18 WHEREAS, These coastlines and beaches are dynamic features that by nature erode
19 during storms and accrete during non-stormy periods. The glacial headland bluffs only erode. The

1 eroded sediment from these coastal bluffs is sediment that is available to nourish the beaches
2 along the littoral drift; and

3 WHEREAS, The headlands, beaches, and barriers from Watch Hill in Westerly to Point
4 Judith in Narragansett are generally eroding at a higher rate than other shorelines along the Rhode
5 Island coast due to their exposure to ocean forces and geologic setting and composition; and

6 WHEREAS, The harsh reality is that Rhode Island's beaches are in a sediment deficit and
7 are therefore eroding, requiring an urgent need of management opportunities that address
8 nourishment and restoration; and

9 WHEREAS, Many activities proposed on shoreline features or in tidal waters directly
10 adjacent to these shoreline features must be tightly managed, controlled or prohibited to protect
11 the natural shoreline functions; and

12 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island coastline, particularly the beaches located on headlands
13 and barriers, provide substantial public recreational opportunities including sun-bathing,
14 beachcombing, exercising, etc. Many public recreational activities, such as swimming, fishing,
15 surfing, etc., include use of the beach area below the high-water mark. The State maintains title to
16 these submerged lands that are held in trust to benefit the public and protect the public's use and
17 interest in these lands; and

18 WHEREAS, In 2023, the Rhode Island Legislature passed a bill that recognizes and
19 embodies the state's Constitutional privileges of the shore including and liberally construed to
20 mean that "...the people shall continue to enjoy and freely exercise all the rights of fishery, and
21 the privileges of the shore, to which they have been heretofore entitled under the charter and
22 usages of this state"; and

23 WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders care deeply about the quality of life these beaches provide
24 as well as the income derived from our beautiful coastline; and

25 WHEREAS, In 2022, visitor spending in Rhode Island totaled \$5.3 billion and sustained
26 more than 80,000 jobs, a large portion of which is derived from and influenced by the State's
27 beaches and ocean facing coastline; now, therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of money in the treasury not
29 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2024-2025, the sum of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000)
30 to the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council to provide remedies, strategies, and
31 projects exclusively for Rhode Island's beach nourishment, restoration and recovery; and the state
32 controller is hereby authorized and directed to draw his orders upon the general treasurer for the
33 payment of said sum, or so much thereof as may be from time to time required, upon receipt of

1 properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND COASTAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (CRMC)

- 1 This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$10,000,000 to the
- 2 Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council.

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