



March 21, 2024

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chairman House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St
Providence RI, 02903

RE: Resolution: 7731 CREATING A LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS

Dear Chairman Bennett and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I am writing to express the League's support for House Resolution 7731, which proposes the creation of a special legislative study commission to address the critical issues facing our state due to climate change. This comprehensive study is essential for understanding, mitigating, and adapting to the various challenges posed by climate change, and its findings will be invaluable for all 39 cities and towns in Rhode Island.

Climate change presents multifaceted challenges that require a coordinated and proactive response at the state level. The proposed study commission will provide a crucial platform for examining the wide-ranging impacts of climate change on Rhode Island's communities, including sea level rise, riverine flooding, beach erosion, loss of property taxes, increased costs of stormwater management, and infrastructure vulnerabilities. By comprehensively analyzing these issues, the commission will enable policymakers to develop effective strategies and resilience programs to protect our communities and infrastructure.

The commission's focus on funding mechanisms for resilience programs is particularly important, as municipalities often face financial constraints in implementing adaptation measures. Identifying sustainable funding sources will be essential for supporting climate resilience efforts and ensuring the long-term sustainability of our communities.

In addition, the commission's examination of the economic consequences of climate change, such as impacts on waterfront property and businesses, underscores the importance of proactive planning and mitigation measures. By understanding these economic implications, policymakers can develop policies that promote sustainable economic development while safeguarding our natural resources and coastal assets.

Moreover, the commission's consideration of measures such as beach nourishment projects, shoreline hardening, managed retreat policies, and green infrastructure solutions highlights the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach to climate resilience. By exploring a range of adaptation strategies, the commission can provide valuable insights into the most effective and sustainable approaches for protecting our communities and ecosystems.

Finally, the commission's emphasis on collaboration with federal and municipal agencies is essential for fostering coordinated and cooperative efforts to address climate-related challenges. By leveraging the expertise and resources of various stakeholders, including local governments, state agencies, and federal partners, we can enhance our collective capacity to respond to climate change and build more resilient communities.

On behalf of the League of Cities and Towns thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express our views.

Sincerely,

David M. Bodah
Associate Director

Cc: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Ernie Almonte, Executive Director, RILCT