



April 4, 2024

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

RE: Bill Number: 8093 AN ACT RELATING TO WATERS AND NAVIGATION -- FRESHWATER LAKE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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

I am writing to express our support for House Bill 8093, which aims to establish the Rhode Island Lake Management Program and a restricted receipt account within the Department of Environmental Management to address lake and pond management issues, particularly concerning the control of aquatic invasive plants. The Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns values our state's freshwater resources, we believe that this legislation is essential for preserving and protecting these valuable natural assets.

Rhode Island's freshwater lakes and ponds provide numerous benefits to our citizens, including recreational opportunities, flood mitigation, and habitat for wildlife and plants. However, many of these water bodies are facing significant threats due to the growth of aquatic invasive plants, harmful algal blooms, and water pollution. It is imperative that we take proactive measures to address these challenges and restore the health of our freshwater ecosystems.

House Bill 8093 recognizes the importance of coordinated efforts to manage and conserve our state's lakes and ponds. By establishing a state lake management program, this legislation will facilitate collaboration between state and local entities, streamline management actions, and provide technical and financial assistance where needed. This proactive approach will not only help address current issues but also ensure the long-term sustainability of our freshwater resources for future generations.

Furthermore, the creation of a restricted receipt account within the Department of Environmental Management will provide dedicated funding to support lake and pond management initiatives, including the control of aquatic invasive plants. This financial support is crucial for implementing effective management strategies and addressing the underlying causes of degradation in our freshwater ecosystems.

In conclusion, we urge you to support House Bill 8093 and its establishment of the Rhode Island Lake Management Program. By taking action to preserve, protect, and restore our freshwater lakes and ponds, we can safeguard the invaluable ecosystem services they provide and enhance the quality of life for all Rhode Islanders.

We look forward to seeing the positive impact that House Bill 8093 will have on our state's freshwater resources.

On behalf of the League of Cities and Towns, thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David M. Bodah".

David M. Bodah
Associate Director

Cc: House Environment and Natural Resources
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel
Ernie Almonte, Executive Director, RILCT