

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Ellen Kane <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 12, 2024 3:20 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Support Shoreline Access Bills H-7645/S-2641, H-7750/S-2634, H-7376/S-2185

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RI House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to ask you to support this package of shoreline access bills.

(2024-S 2641, 2024-H 7645) would require a municipality, when abandoning a road, to vote on whether or not to preserve an easement for walking or other types of recreation. Under current Rhode Island law the only option for a municipality that does not wish to maintain a road is to abandon it totally to the abutting private property owners.

(2024-S 2634, 2024-H 7750) would allow CRMC to protect historical footpaths used for shoreline access through official designation.

(2024-S 2185, 2024-H 7376) would educate new buyers of oceanfront property on Rhode Island shoreline access law and require disclosure of any permits or conditions of public access tied to the property, in order to avoid surprises that might come up. A recent dispute over public access of a seawall shows that this disclosure is currently lacking.

These bills work together to protect shoreline access for the public, a right articulated in the RI Constitution but like all rights, it needs on-going attention and safe-guarding.

Buyers and renters of shoreline property need protection from the worst of American marketing practices - the use of the inexact phrase "private beach", which leads to conflict, both in court and on the sand.

I'm waiting for someone to advertise "private ocean". Let's not let that happen in RI.

The bills 2024-S 2185, 2024-H 7376 will go a long way toward better education, more truth-in-advertising, and therefore better enjoyment of the privileges of the shore.

Enabling the CRMC to protect historical footpaths, long used for shoreline access, is simply helping the law following the realities of human behavior and common sense, Not protecting this results in exclusion, which works to block the public from the shore. People walk. Please acknowledge it.

And strengthening a Town's ability to legally protect the public's easement to the shore while also protecting a Town's budget and liability constraints is essential to ensuring access for everyone in the state, not just those who live in shoreline towns or own shoreline property.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for voting for these well thought out bills. They fill in some of the important gaps which have denied equal access for the public.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kane

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