



March 12, 2024

To: House Committee on Judiciary

Re: **H7376, H7645, H7750**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairperson Craven and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action, and its 20,000 Rhode Island members, supports three bills before you today intended to protect and preserve the right of Rhode Islanders to access the shoreline.

H7376 would require written acknowledgment from any buyer of oceanfront or shoreline property that they have been informed of the public's rights and privileges of the shore. This bill is critically important to increasing awareness and understanding of the shoreline access rights of all Rhode Islanders. Over time, this legislation should go a long way in avoiding potential conflicts between shoreline property owners and members of the public attempting to exercise their Constitutionally-protected right to access the shore.

H7645 allows for a qualified abandonment of public town roads which grants a public easement over said road allowing it to be converted to a walking/hiking/biking trail as well as for access to parks, nature preserves and other recreational facilities. This bill would provide more flexibility to cities and towns who want to protect existing public rights-of-way to the shore, or to establish new rights-of-way.

H7750 would eliminate the existing limits on rights of footway being acquired by adverse possession. While eliminating this provision may seem in conflict with Clean Water Action's support for H7455, we feel that the intent of both H7750 and H7455 are actually complimentary. The passage of H7455 would accomplish the goal of protecting the Pawtuxet River Trail; and the passage of H7750 would still leave open the possibility of the Pawtuxet Trail being protecting through other legal means.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jed Thorp", written in a cursive style.

Jed Thorp,
Rhode Island Director, Clean Water Action

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