

Tiverton Conservation Commission

343 Highland Road, Tiverton, RI, 02878

February 10, 2024

Rhode Island General Assembly
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
The State House
Providence, RI, 02903

RE: Support for Bill Number H 7060

Dear House Municipal Government and Housing Committee Members,

The Tiverton Conservation Commission has long had concerns about aquaculture leases in Nannaquacket Pond and the Sakonnet River. In addition to their negative visual impact (especially at low tide), the proposed locations for these leases almost always pose conflicts with, and if approved by the CRMC would result in restrictions being placed upon, traditional shoreline uses at the lease sites including, but not limited to, fishing, clamming, boat moorings and salt water recreation activities. In addition, the fact that many of the proposed lease sites are in shallow waters adjacent to the few areas with easy public access to the sea increases our concern over the resulting restrictions on the public use of those areas should the leases be approved.

At its January 2024 meeting, the Tiverton Conservation Commission voted unanimously to endorse and support the passage of House Bill H 7060 which would protect the Seapowet Marsh Management Area – both on land and in the adjacent waters of Seapowet Cove and the Sakonnet River - from any further commercial development. Passage of this bill into law would eliminate all potential conflicts between new aquaculture leases and traditional shoreline activities at this location, and the Commission urges the members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee to vote in favor of this legislation. Places along the Rhode Island shoreline where the public has free and unobstructed access to salt water for passive recreational activities are precious and a critical part of our coastal heritage. Passage of House Bill H 7060 will prohibit any further commercial activities in the Seapowet Management Area, thereby preserving critical aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat for future generations of Rhode Islanders to experience and enjoy as we do today.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ramotowski

Dr. Thomas S. Ramotowski
Chairman

cc: Tiverton Conservation Commission; Tiverton Harbor Commission; Tiverton Town Council