

**Testimony of Peter Trafton, on behalf of Environment Council of Rhode Island
SUPPORT FOR H 8148 - Committee Meeting of Tue. April 9, 2024**

Dear Chair Shanley and Honorable members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections,

I write as the Co-VP of Policy for the Environment Council of Rhode Island with our strongest support for Rep. Cortvriend and colleagues' bill, 8148, which will revise our state's Coastal Resources Management Council and set it on an appropriate future course.

The CRMC has long been a thorn in the side of Rhode Island's efforts to manage our 400+ miles of shoreline, arguably one of the most important aspects of the ocean state. The Council is composed of politically appointed volunteers with no required expertise in coastal matters. I've been to their meetings. They are often deplorable. Let the Champlin's Marina case be a prime example.

The CRMC is not a normal state agency. It does not provide us with the services that Rhode Island and its citizens require. Facing the coastal ravages of climate change and the opportunities of meaningful responses to this collection of existential threats, we need to replace the current management council with a state Department of Coastal Resources as our lead agency for management coastal affairs. The new coastal resources department would be led by a director, appointed by the governor with advice and consent of the Senate. It would retain its excellent but probably understaffed team of experts. The new department would take over all of the responsibilities and powers of the current CRMC.

It is time to do this now. We have struggled with the CRMC long enough. Thank you for considering ECRI's support for the Department of Coastal Resources.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Trafton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Trafton, VP Policy, Environment Council of Rhode Island