

Testimony in Favor of House Bill 8148  
April 8, 2024

Members, thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you.

I am Bill Salmons from Jamestown and a member of Protect Conanicut Coastline, a group of committed citizens supporting this bill.

I am strongly in favor of House Bill H8148 and its companion Senate bill, S2928-A, establishing a department of coastal resources. The reason for my support is that the bill speaks to strengthening the professional management of the state's coastal resources and fully aligns with the principles of good governance.

By eliminating the coastal resources management council, this reform bill removes a potential for less than knowledgeable council members ruling on increasingly complex issues impacting our core environmental resources, as well as the potential for undue influence on key decisions by partisan interests. Corporations, particularly, have the ability to marshal a great deal of money to get the results that they are looking for. We are all acutely aware of the corrosive influence of money on politics and governing, especially given the dedicated focus on dark money by our esteemed US Senator Sheldon Whitehouse.

The coastal resources of our beautiful Ocean State are for the benefit of all our citizens, but we have too often seen that private citizens are at a disadvantage when up against deep-pocketed corporate interests looking to expand marinas, build hotels, or dredge waterways.

When it comes time to vote on this reform bill, I would urge each of you to weigh professionalism and good governance against the potential for back room deal-making.

Thank you for your consideration.

William Salmons  
Jamestown, RI