



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

February 12, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chairman
House Committee on State Government and Elections
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H 5273 An Act Relating to Food and Drugs – The Good Samaritan Overdose Prevention Act of 2016

Dear Chairman Shanley,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 5273, which would require that all lifeguards and park and forest rangers employed at state or municipal facilities be trained in the administration of opioid antagonists. DEM strongly supports the intent of this bill but has some recommended amendments to the bill language.

As the steward of Rhode Island's state parks, beaches, and campgrounds, DEM has worked over the past several years to train staff in the safe administration of Narcan. At present, every Environmental Police Officer carries Narcan and has been trained to administer it, and the regional State Parks managers located throughout the state were most recently trained to administer Narcan. DEM is committed to ensuring that visitors to the properties we oversee have a safe experience and we take seriously the need to be prepared for any type of situation that may arise.

Each year, DEM hires hundreds of seasonal employees to work at the facilities we manage including lifeguards and park rangers. Although these seasonal and part-time employees serve important roles in our beaches and parks, we believe that this bill's requirement to train employees in the administration of opioid antagonists should apply exclusively to our full-time employees, who are readily available to respond to an overdose all year round. Thus, we recommend that the bill be amended to require training for opioid antagonists for full-time staff in the DEM Division of Parks and Recreation. This will expand the pool of DEM staff available to administer Narcan should the need arise at one of our facilities and ultimately better serve the intent of the bill.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of Legislative Affairs, at ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence Gray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

cc: Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
The Honorable William O'Brien
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director