

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** Kenny Mendez <kenneth.mendez@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 7, 2025 11:10 AM  
**To:** House State Government and Elections Committee  
**Cc:** Rep. Edwards, John G.; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph  
**Subject:** Support for H. 5453 – Urgent Need for Meaningful Reform of the CRMC

Via Email  
House State Government and Elections Committee

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support legislative efforts to reform the CRMC, particularly H. 5453. This legislation will ensure greater transparency, accountability, and efficiency at the CRMC. I write to you as someone who has directly experienced the challenges of working with the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC).

My experience with CRMC and the aquaculture issue in Tiverton, highlight the agency's lack of clear communication, inconsistent application of regulations, and disregard for the concerns of local residents. The drawn-out process, lack of responsiveness, and unclear criteria for decision-making have not only frustrated those directly impacted but have also eroded public trust in the agency's ability to manage coastal resources. Objectors and applicants are left confused and discouraged by the agency's unclear procedures and unpredictable outcomes.

H. 5453 offers comprehensive and structural reform. This bill addresses many of my concerns and will modernize and strengthen coastal resource management in our state:

- Shifts CRMC operations into a division of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), an agency that is better resourced and capable of managing these responsibilities.
- Eliminates the volunteer council and transfers authority with clear duties, responsibilities, and accountability to the DEM Director.
- Enables DEM to merge overlapping functions with CRMC to create greater efficiency and reduce duplication.
- Creates the potential to incorporate missing staff attorney functions within the existing DEM staff attorney structure.
- Provides DEM with the ability to separate functions where there are embedded conflicts of interest in CRMC's current small staff size.
- Establishes a structure for future integration to strengthen operations and provide a greater return on investment.

These reforms are essential to restoring public confidence and ensuring that Rhode Island's coastal management policies serve environmental and community interests. As someone who has navigated the CRMC process firsthand, I can attest to the urgent need for these changes.

I commend the Rhode Island legislature for taking action on this important issue and urge your support for H. 5453. The residents of Rhode Island deserve a coastal management system that is fair, efficient, and

accountable. Rhode Island needs meaningful CRMC reform and H. 5453 provides the most effective way to achieve that.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Mendez  
Tiverton, RI

cc: Representative K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker of the House  
Representative John G. Edwards