

From: Robin Squibb srsquibb@gmail.com
Subject: Please vote YES for House bill H5706
Date: April 8, 2025 at 11:13 AM
To: HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov

RS

To: Members of the Rhode Island State Government and Elections Committee

SUBJECT: Please support Bill H5706.

FROM: Robin Squibb
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It is time to finally get rid of the politically-appointed Council of the CRMC before they destroy so much of what really matters to Rhode Islanders. This bill is not only about saving our beautiful coastline and Narragansett Bay. It's about holding people accountable for good governance, ending the long tradition of corruption in the CRMC, protecting our environment, preparing for climate change, safeguarding recreational use of the bay, promoting aquaculture, and demanding social justice. By removing the politically appointed council from the CRMC all of this will happen.

Often the Council fails to meet because they can't reach a forum. Cases sit for years unresolved. Its members are not required to have any expertise and most don't. They have the ability to override the decisions made by the very capable and experienced staff and often they do. The Council is responsible to no one and can legally do whatever they please, and that they do.

The Council even made a deal with Revolution Wind without the mandated approval of the General Assembly. Nothing happened to any of the members, but it appears that long time council member Jerry Sahagian left the council a few days later. (I believe that Jerry used to be Governor McKee's fund raiser and possible still is.)

And please don't fall for the specious argument that it will cost more money. It will more likely save money. Over five years ago I challenged the CRMC's approving a permit in favor of granting a neighbor a variance for an oversized dock and two boat lifts. The staff approved the dock but not the lifts. Needless to say I lost, and my neighbor was given permission to build both the dock and the lifts. I appealed the case to Superior Court, and we won hands down. So far this has cost over \$150,000 in legal fees, and now the case has been appealed to The Supreme Court which will likely cost another \$100,000. I can only imagine how much using a private law firm must have cost the CRMC to oppose me. B5706 would add an in-house lawyer to the newly reformed agency, saving thousands of dollars.

In the process I have been bullied, harassed and physically threatened. My savings are gone. So much for those golden years. Yes, yes, I know it didn't have to do this, but none of our law makers would listen. There was no place to turn. Thanks to the work of AG Neronha and Save the Bay there is now hope. But only if you and other lawmakers demand that this bill is brought up for a vote and passed and approved by Governor McKee.

Why Speaker Shekarchi has failed to even bring this bill (or a similar one) to the house floor for a vote is lost on me. Please question why it is best for all Rhode Islanders that you keep this relic of Rhode Island's corruption in charge of the CRMC's decisions.

Thank you for your service to Rhode Island and for taking the time to read this email (assuming you have gotten this far).