



## NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS

April 8, 2025

To Chairman Shaley and the members of the House State Government & Elections Committee

Re: BHA Support for H6093 – An Act Relating to Waters & Navigation – Rights-of-Way Parking

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting. Our members consider protecting access to public lands and waters a top priority, recognizing that access is one of the most important factors to our participation in, and the perpetuation of, our outdoor traditions.

With these things in mind, **BHA urges the Committee to support H6093**, which seeks to create requirements for parking modifications near state-designated rights-of-way to the shore.

For decades the State of Rhode Island has expended significant resources to protect and enhance public shoreline access, including efforts by RI's Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) to designate rights-of-way to the shore. Unfortunately, there are countless examples around the state of efforts to thwart these efforts and limit access. In many cases these efforts come in the form of municipalities limiting or eliminating public parking in specific areas near rights-of-way to the shore as an exclusionary tactic – if the public can't park a vehicle nearby, they are less likely to show up at all.

Rather than forcing municipalities to take actions or prohibiting certain things, H6093's focus relates only to a procedure that would be followed when initiating changes in municipal parking policies. H6093 would ensure that parking is not quietly eliminated overnight, or through some esoteric public body that few interested in public shoreline access follow. Instead, it would require a public-facing comment period and engagement with CRMC- the agency most prominently involved in shoreline access initiatives in RI - and would provide the public with a forum to weigh in on changes.

While it won't fix the instances where access has already been lost through restricted parking, H6093 proposes measures that will reduce or eliminate this exclusionary tactic moving forward, and **BHA respectfully urges the Committee, and ultimately the RI General Assembly, to support H6093.**

Thank you for your consideration,

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