



**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

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June 7, 2021

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

**RE: H 6383 An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Environmental Justice Act**

Dear Chairman Shanley,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 6383, which would establish new permit requirements for projects located in environmental justice focus areas. DEM supports efforts to more proactively address environmental justice in state government.

Environmental justice (EJ) refers to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Throughout Rhode Island's history, certain populations and areas of the state have been subject to disproportionate amounts of pollution and other environmental hazards and have not had equal access to benefits. DEM is committed to finding solutions that will consider these past injustices and ensure that all residents of Rhode Island benefit from a clean, healthy environment.

Promoting EJ requires that state government work closely with residents of impacted communities to develop policies that address past inequities and prevent such inequities in the future. H 6383 presents useful concepts towards doing so by providing opportunities for public participation, requiring that cumulative impacts be considered during permit application reviews, and increasing the importance of public health considerations and community support in the review process. However, one concern is that the bill does not provide additional resources that DEM will need to implement these new requirements.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to work with you to address the issues raised in this letter. Please feel free to contact Terry Gray,

Deputy Director for Environmental Protection, at [terry.gray@dem.ri.gov](mailto:terry.gray@dem.ri.gov) should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Coit". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Janet" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Coit".

Janet Coit  
Director

CC: Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections  
The Honorable Karen Alzate