

Lou Mansolillo

From: Garrett Russ <garrettmruss@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2026 8:55 AM
To: Rep. Solomon, Joseph J. Jr.; Rep. O'Brien, William W.; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Rep. Casey, Stephen M.; Rep. DeSimone, Anthony J.; Rep. Finkelman, Alex S.; Rep. Kennedy, Brian Patrick; Rep. Newberry, Brian C.; Rep. Paplauskas, Christopher G.; Rep. Phillips, Robert D.; Rep. Potter, Brandon C.; Rep. Sanchez, Enrique George; Rep. Serpa, Patricia A.; Rep. Spears, Tina L.; Rep. Voas, Brandon T.; House Corporations Committee; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Rep. Blazejewski, Christopher R.; Rep. Chippendale, Michael W.
Cc: Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.; Rep. Craven, Robert E.; Sen. Valverde, Bridget G.; Sen. DiMario, Alana; town council@northkingstownri.gov
Subject: Re: Support for HB 8400 — Prohibiting Pyrolysis at Quonset Business Park

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Dear Chair and Members,

I recently submitted written testimony in strong support of HB 8400, which would prohibit pyrolysis at Quonset Business Park. I am writing briefly to add one point I want to be direct about, informed by new correspondence now on the public record.

I understand it is standard practice to hold bills for further study following a first committee hearing. But that outcome would be particularly harmful here. QDC Managing Director Steven King's April 16 letter to Governor McKee makes clear that QDC has placed only a pause on this project, not a withdrawal, pending the study commission's findings in January 2027. That means a board majority could revive this project at any time. A bill held for further study this session does not return until January 2027 at the earliest, by which point the commission's findings could be used to justify proceeding before the next legislative session can respond.

Governor McKee wrote to Town Manager Mollis on April 16 pledging to "stand shoulder to shoulder with the community" if North Kingstown's opposition continues. It does. The General Assembly has the opportunity to make that commitment permanent before June. Please do not let this bill die quietly while the clock runs out.

Respectfully submitted,

Garrett Russ
70 Pat Circle
North Kingstown, Rhode Island

On Sat, Apr 25, 2026 at 10:11 AM Garrett Russ <garrettmruss@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Chair and Members of the House Corporations Committee,

I am a North Kingstown resident and homeowner writing in strong support of House Bill 8400, sponsored by Representatives Casimiro, Craven, McEntee, Caldwell, Finkelman, Solomon, and Kazarian, which would prohibit the operation of any thermal waste conversion facility, including

pyrolysis, within the Quonset Point/Davisville Industrial Park. I also respectfully request that the committee amend the bill to remove its February 1, 2027, expiration date, making the prohibition permanent.

More than 400 of my neighbors attended a special Town Council meeting on March 30 in unanimous opposition to the proposed QSS Biosolids sewage sludge pyrolysis facility. The Town Council passed a unanimous resolution demanding rescission of QDC's approval. Governor McKee has pledged to stand with the community. This bill gives the General Assembly the opportunity to provide a clear, permanent answer.

This facility was approved without any meaningful public process, and the regulatory reviews that should have caught it appear to have failed.

The QDC board voted in closed session in November 2024 to approve a ground lease for QSS Biosolids LLC. The item appeared on the public agenda only as "Approval of Ground Lease to Global Solutions, LLC," obscuring both the nature of the project and the developer's actual identity. North Kingstown residents did not learn what had been approved until March 2026, more than a year later. The two North Kingstown representatives on the QDC board voted against the project and were overruled by a majority of appointees whose institutional mandate is to advance development rather than represent the host community.

The environmental review framework designed to protect this exact situation appears to have been bypassed.

A binding 1979 Settlement Agreement signed by the Conservation Law Foundation, Save The Bay, and the Audubon Society established a mandatory 45-day multi-agency environmental review for any prospective developer at Quonset. A 2016 Memorandum of Agreement established a "Site Readiness Program" that replaced this review with a one-page form processed within 7 business days. If 135 All American Way is a Site Readiness parcel, the environmental safeguards established by that settlement were effectively eliminated before QSS Biosolids ever filed its application.

The air quality permit issued for this facility is legally contested, and the facility is not in compliance with environmental law.

RIDEM issued a minor-source air permit in January 2026, with no public notice and no opportunity for comment. A formal citizen enforcement petition has been filed alleging that the facility's integrated design, in which pyrolysis gases are combusted on-site, constitutes incineration under Clean Air Act standards, a classification EPA has maintained since 2005. Incineration requires a major-source permit, which mandates public notice and a formal comment period. If this classification is correct, both of the foundational environmental gatekeeping processes for this project failed simultaneously.

Beyond the permit, the project is already out of regulatory compliance. Site work began before required approvals were in place, resulting in unauthorized clearing within protected wetland buffer zones and triggering a cease-and-desist order. RIDEM has been unable to complete its wetlands application review due to significant unresolved deficiencies, including inadequate groundwater protections and substantial projected increases in runoff to Sandhill Brook.

The location itself makes this facility uniquely unacceptable.

The proposed facility would process approximately 160 tons of sewage sludge per day, adjacent to residential neighborhoods, an affordable housing complex, a development of more than 300 homes,

and within two miles of multiple schools. The site lies within the recharge zone of the Hunt-Annaquatucket-Pettaquamscutt Sole Source Aquifer, designated by EPA as "highly vulnerable to contamination" and the drinking water source for thousands of Rhode Islanders. It is directly adjacent to Sandhill Brook and the Black Swamp wetland complex.

I am aware that some members have suggested remaining open to pyrolysis pending further review, and I respect the instinct toward thoroughness. But this is not a situation where the facts are unknown and the technology merely unfamiliar. The facts on the record are these: a facility sited over a sole-source drinking water aquifer, already in violation of wetlands law, permitted without public notice under a classification that is formally contested, approved in a closed session that the host community was not informed of for over a year. Openness to the technology in the abstract is reasonable. Openness to this facility at this site, on this record, is not the same thing.

Rhode Island does need a statewide biosolids management strategy, and a broad legislative study commission is appropriate. But that conversation should not begin with a facility that bypassed public process, sits atop a drinking water supply for thousands of people, and is already out of environmental compliance. HB 8400 does not foreclose a statewide strategy. It ensures that the strategy is not built on this foundation.

HB 8400 passed the House Corporations Committee in companion form last year. The legislative session ends in June. I respectfully ask the committee to schedule this bill for a prompt hearing and vote, amend it to remove the expiration date, and recommend its passage to the full House.

I am prepared to testify in person when this bill is heard and welcome the opportunity.

Respectfully, Garrett Russ

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Garrett Russ
garrettmruss@gmail.com
860-941-1602