



*Rhode Island*  
**SALTWATER  
ANGLERS  
Association**



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February 16, 2023

RI House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

**Re: Support for H5037**

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association represents over 7500 recreational anglers in Rhode Island and Southeastern New England. We would like to take this opportunity to express our support for H5037, which requires all aquaculture leases in the Sakonnet River area to be located at least one thousand feet (1,000') from the median high tide/tide line.

We recognize that many RI citizens, including many of our members access the shore and near-shore areas to fish and shellfish these areas. We believe that H5037 will help protect the rights of these citizens to use these waters without interference from aquaculture operations, whether that be casting from shore, digging the shallow water, or kayaking these areas. In addition, the Sakonnet River has been designated by RI CRMC as Type 1 waters along the shore and Type 2 water throughout. Type 1 is "Conservation Areas" which are defined as wildlife areas and areas that are unsuitable for structures. Type 2 are areas subject to "Low-Intensity Use". This classification of the Sakonnet River shoreline as Type 1 makes this an area that is particularly appropriate for a 1000' setback as written in this legislation.

We understand that this legislation has a sunset provision such that it will expire on July 1, 2025. Given the nature of the area we would like to see this requirement extended beyond 2025, but at least H5037 allows these restrictions to be in place for 2 years, at which time we would hope that the provisions would be extended as appropriate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rich Hitt".

Richard Hittinger  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association