



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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April 4, 2024

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chairman
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: H 7515 An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Microplastics Reduction Act

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 7515, which would direct DEM to take a series of actions related to microplastics. DEM has concerns with this legislation related to the lack of standardized testing methodology and sufficient lab capacity to implement the testing strategy required by the bill. We also believe that we would need additional staff and other resources to implement the bill if it was enacted.

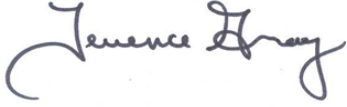
H 7515 correctly identifies microplastics pollution as a growing water quality concern that poses a threat to the environment and human health and requires that state government take certain actions in response. Specifically, the bill would direct DEM to jointly develop a microplastics testing strategy with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) no later than January 1, 2026; adopt a statewide microplastics strategy plan, again in coordination with RIDOH, no later than January 1, 2027; and would prohibit the sale of any product containing intentionally added synthetic polymer microparticles effective January 1, 2028.

Although DEM agrees that microplastics pose a threat worthy of further study, we are concerned that a standardized testing methodology for identifying microplastics does not currently exist. This factor, combined with the limited lab capacity available to conduct such testing, will make it difficult for DEM to implement the testing requirement included in the legislation. California is currently working to adopt a microplastics testing requirement for drinking water supplies and upon doing so will be the first state to have any type of microplastics testing regime in place. Until the science on this topic advances further it will be difficult for Rhode Island to adopt a testing requirement of our own.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Susan Forcier, DEM Deputy

Director for Environmental Protection, at susan.forcier@dem.ri.gov should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

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

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

cc: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
The Honorable Jennifer Boylan
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director