



RHODE ISLAND

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

May 29, 2025

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

RE: H 6157 An Act Relating to Fish and Wildlife – Commercial Fishing Licenses

Dear Chairman Bennett,

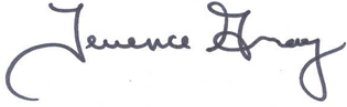
Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 6157, which would create a new license allowing for the harvest of green crabs. DEM supports this legislation with a recommended amendment to the effective date.

Green crabs, also known as European green crabs, are native to the coast of Europe and North Africa and are an invasive species in Rhode Island. Like many invasive species, the green crab poses a threat to the ecosystem and is particularly harmful for shellfish and eelgrass. Therefore, DEM is supportive of efforts to make it easier for fishers to harvest green crabs both for economic reasons and to help remove them from the environment. Although green crabs may be harvested under existing fishing licenses offered by DEM, we support efforts to make it easier to do so through a lower cost license.

DEM respectfully recommends that the bill be amended so that the new license comes into effect on January 1, 2026, rather than upon passage, to align with the existing license calendar and to provide us with the time necessary to prepare an application and related documents. We also note that while green crabs are more commonly being consumed for food, they are much more frequently used as bait to catch other marine species. This is relevant because the license proposed by this legislation would allow for the legal harvest of green crabs, but the requirement that a buyer or seller of green crabs hold a valid dealer's license would remain in effect. Furthermore, the Direct Sale Dealer License allows individuals to sell live crabs directly to consumers rather than to licensed dealers but is limited to sales for food and does not include sales for use as bait.

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 Scott Olszewski, Acting Chief of the DEM Division of Marine Fisheries, at scott.olszewski@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" being more prominent than the last name "Gray".

Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

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