



WOONASQUATUCKET RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

45 Eagle Street, Suite 202 • Providence RI 02909
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RE: Letter of Support for House Bill #6016 to provide funding for critical coastal hazard decision support tools hosted at URI

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Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Finance Committee,

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council strongly supports [House Bill #6016](#) to provide funding for critical coastal hazard decision support tools hosted at the University of Rhode Island.

Three URI-led research-based decision support tools require ongoing funding to serve the needs of Rhode Island: 1) RI Coastal Hazards Analysis, Modeling and Prediction system (RI-CHAMP), 2) STORMTOOLS, and 3) MyCoast Rhode Island were developed and implemented since 2014 in response to the expressed needs of Rhode Island's emergency managers, partner communities, state regulatory agencies, and military installations. These URI-led products play key roles in building capacity to address risks from present-day coastal storms, as well as increasing storm intensity, to enhance RI's emergency management system, state and local resilience planning, coastal policy/permitting process, and community awareness and buy-in. These tools may soon go offline due a funding shortfall.

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council is very concerned about the prospect of losing access to these critical tools. WRWC collaborates with residents of Central Providence neighborhoods to ensure these tools are accessible and encourage the documentation of flooding hotspots in the lower Woonasquatucket River watershed. These tools are crucial in our collaboration with municipalities and other organizations and allow us to identify priority areas for local climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies such as the implementation of green infrastructure projects. As Rhode Island faces severe climate threats due to sea level rise and increasing storm severity we recognize the need for investment in tools that will help our communities become more prepared and resilient.

Thank you for your consideration of this vital funding.

Sincerely,

Alicia Lehrer
Executive Director

