

April 2, 2025

Representative Marvin L. Abney
Chairman, Rhode Island House Finance Committee
12 Summer St.
Newport, RI 02840

Subject: Letter of Support for bill H 6016 to provide funding for critical coastal hazard decision support tools hosted at URI

Dear Chairman Abney,

As a former Executive Director of Save The Bay, Regional Administer of EPA New England under President Obama, Professor of the Practice at Brown University, and now as a Senior Consultant with GSA Geoenvironmental I am writing to express my strong support for bill [2025-H 6016](#) to provide funding for critical coastal hazard decision support tools hosted at URI.

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. Developed largely with federal resources 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. Without state funding to sustain their operations, these tools will go offline, and millions of taxpayer dollars will be wasted.

In 1988, James Hansen famously testified before Congress, alerting the world that human activity was warming the planet. In 2023, he and a team of leading scientists announced that climate change is accelerating, tracking along the worst-case scenarios. The result will be increasingly destructive impacts: sea level rise, extreme rainfall, heat waves, droughts, and wildfires, all of which threaten the well-being of communities for the remainder of this century. With more federal funding cuts coming that threaten climate change work at EPA, FEMA and NOAA, Rhode Island cities and Towns simply must have RI Coastal Hazards Analysis, Modeling and Prediction system (RI-CHAMP), STORMTOOLS, and MyCoast to fight for a safe future.

The talented URI teams that built these tools did so on their own accord. They are committed to helping Rhode Islanders understand the impact climate change will have on their communities. Their foresight and entrepreneur effort should be honored by urgently appropriating the \$400,000 that is necessary to sustain their effective use.

Thank you for your consideration of this vital funding.

Curt Spalding
Senior Consultant, GSA Geoenvironmental
140 Shaw Ave.
Cranston, RI 02905