



TOWN OF PORTSMOUTH

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Richard A. Rainer Jr.
Town Administrator

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

Subject: Support for Bill H 6016 – Funding for URI Coastal Hazard Decision Support Tools

Dear Chairman Abney,

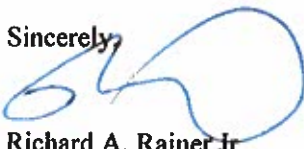
I write in strong support of Bill 2025-H 6016, which would provide critical funding for the continuation of coastal hazard decision support tools hosted by the University of Rhode Island (URI). These tools, including the Rhode Island Coastal Hazards Analysis, Modeling, and Prediction system (RI-CHAMP), STORMTOOLS, and MyCoast Rhode Island, have been essential resources for Rhode Island's emergency management professionals, municipalities, state agencies, and military installations since their inception in 2014.

The Town of Portsmouth relies heavily on these tools to enhance our hazard mitigation planning, coastal project assessments, disaster preparedness, damage evaluations, and evacuation strategies. These resources have been instrumental in supporting Portsmouth's leadership role in the development of Rhode Island's first Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (RHMP), in partnership with Newport, Middletown, and the Newport Naval Station through a BRIC grant.

The potential loss of these tools due to funding shortages poses a significant risk to our collective ability to plan for and respond to coastal hazards. As we finalize the RHMP, we are actively working with URI to enhance RI-CHAMP's capabilities, including expanding its predictive functions to assess potential storm damage to residential structures in vulnerable coastal neighborhoods. This critical advancement would greatly assist local emergency managers in improving home protection strategies and refining evacuation messaging.

On behalf of the Town of Portsmouth, I urge you and the committee to support this funding to ensure these invaluable tools remain available and continue evolving to meet Rhode Island's resilience needs. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this essential investment in our state's coastal preparedness.

Sincerely,



Richard A. Rainer Jr.
Town Administrator

cc: Lea Hitchen, Town Planner, Town of Portsmouth
Raymond Perry, Director of Emergency Management, Town of Portsmouth