



**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
235 Promenade Street, Room 425  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chairman  
House Committee on Finance  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: H 5079 An Act Relating to Parks and Recreational Areas – General Provisions**

Dear Chairman Abney,

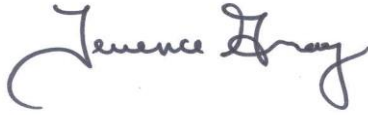
Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 5079, which would allow individuals to obtain a disability pass for DEM properties based on a determination by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services that the individual is disabled for purposes of Medicaid eligibility. DEM fully supports the intent of this legislation but recommends that the language be amended to clarify that the new provision applies only to individuals aged 19 years or younger.

Under R.I. Gen. Laws § 32-1-17, individuals with a disability are exempted from any fees for parking, admittance, or other user fees for playing golf at state recreational facilities. The law also specifies that a person with a disability is one who receives social security disability benefits; supplemental security income benefits; or veterans' benefits and who shall be determined under applicable federal law to be one hundred percent disabled through a service-connected disability. While this system generally works well, in DEM's experience it has been extremely difficult for younger individuals to obtain the documentation needed to receive a disability pass. This legislation, along with DEM's proposed amendment, would provide a pathway for families with children with a disability to obtain the benefit which the law already intends for them to receive.

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 Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of

Legislative Affairs, at [ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov](mailto:ryan.mulcahey@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 Finance  
The Honorable Tina Spears  
Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director