

April 21, 2025

Rhode Island General Assembly
House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
State House – 82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Hearing on House Bills 5511 and 6069

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

We are respectfully writing in opposition to House Bills 5511 and 6069 which will have the immediate and direct effect of denying the Saletin family and three nearby home-owners access to clean potable water. The General Assembly has passed legislation that protects every Rhode Islander by assuring access to clean potable water. House Bills 5511 and 6069 seek to permit the Town of Jamestown to deny that right to our family and continue its selective, unprecedented and punitive denial of clean, potable water to us and three neighboring Rhode Island families. Our four families have worked diligently to explain the folly of the Jamestown Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners' selective denial of clean, potable water to us, but to no avail.

Each Member of the Jamestown Water Board has the benefit of their family having access to Town water. Despite spending the last year and a half proving, with our expert consultants, that we clearly meet the standard for receiving Town water under the existing State statute, the Jamestown Water Board ignored the evidence presented and voted to deny us water. Instead, the Jamestown Water Board suggested that it is not subject to the protections provided by the State statute.

We respectfully request that you vote against House Bills 5511 and 6069 and deny the Jamestown Water Board the opportunity to continue to victimize our family and our three neighbors. Jamestown has proven that it should not be exempted from the protections afforded to all other Rhode Island families by the existing State statute. We are not asking for any special treatment, we are only asking for the same protections that other Rhode Islanders are afforded for access to clean potable water.

The Town claims that it is saving its water for future development in its urban district. This is despite the fact that the Town is now "expanding" its water district to the south side of the Island, into what it describes as the Rural Water District. The Jamestown Water Board is hoarding the Town's water for some future use while denying us and our three (3) neighbors, who have an immediate need for clean water and access to the municipal water supply. We had even offered to pay for the extension of the water line which also will provide better fire

protection with the installation of a new Fire Hydrant. This proposal was supported by the Town Fire Chief in comments to our water application, but again to no avail.

After we appealed the Town's decision denying our application to the Rhode Island Water Resources Board and argued our appeal to a three-member Prehearing Panel of the Water Resources Board, the Prehearing Panel recently voted unanimously to issue a recommendation to the full Water Resources Board to reverse the Town's decision on our application and to similarly reverse the decisions on the applications of our three (3) neighbors. The full Water Resources Board is scheduled to receive these four (4) reversal recommendations and hold a hearing on these appeals on April 23, 2025. The Town continues to attempt to circumvent the current legislative standards and the administrative review process for evaluating water service extension applications by repeatedly seeking legislative amendments which would specifically and selectively exempt Jamestown from those statutory standards.

Once again, Debby and I respectfully request that you protect our family and our three neighbors from the continued misuse of Town authority and reject the Town's proposed House Bills 5511 and 6069.

Thank you,

Jeffrey and Deborah Saletin
14 Seaview Avenue, Jamestown, RI
(401) 529-9730