



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

March 25, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley  
Chairman  
House Committee on State Government and Elections  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: H 5708 An Act Relating to Elections – Registration of Voters**

Dear Chairman Shanley,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 5708, which would require that any person applying for a hunting or fishing license be registered to vote.

State hunting and fishing licenses can be obtained through one of several options offered by DEM. These options include a DEM-operated online portal known as Rhode Island Outdoors, the DEM Office of Boating Registration and Licenses in Providence, many city and town halls, and some private retailers.<sup>1</sup> The ability for DEM to offer voter registration through each of these options varies. For example, it is DEM's understanding that the Department of Motor Vehicles offers voter registration through their online portal. It may be possible to modify the Rhode Island Outdoors portal to allow voter registration, but there will likely be a financial cost associated with such a change. It may be more challenging to implement requirements that private retailers serving as sales agents on DEM's behalf provide voter registration services.

A potential hurdle to implementing voter registration requirements tied to the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses is the collection and verification of documentation providing proof of citizenship. DEM does not currently collect such documentation to obtain hunting or fishing licenses. Individuals are only required to provide proof of Rhode Island residency, such as through a driver's license, to be charged the resident fee for licenses. DEM would require guidance from other state entities as to the appropriate documents that must be provided at time of registration to ensure that we comply with federal and state law governing voter registration.

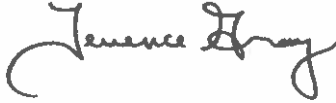
We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/fish-wildlife/licenses-applications/list-license-agents>

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 black 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 State Government and Elections  
The Honorable Richard Fascia  
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director