



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

March 10, 2026

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

RE: H 7233 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 7233, 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.¹ 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

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

Legislative Affairs, at 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 that reads "Terrence Gray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

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