

**Trafton testimony in behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island supporting H7996  
House State Government Committee, April 30, 2026.**

Dear Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

I'm Peter Trafton from Providence, Co-VP of Policy for the Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) writing with our strongest support for H 7996, which would **reorganize the Coastal Resources Management Council under the Department of Environmental Management and create the Bureau of Coastal Resources Management in its place.**

The saga of Rhode Island's current CRMC is well known. A collection of political appointees has been given responsibility for decision-making. It has failed embarrassingly to do its work in a respectable manner. From failing to assemble a quorum to not following our laws, from being chastised by our courts and Attorney General, the CRMC decision-making leadership has served our state poorly.

Somewhat surprisingly, the professional employees of the CRMC have proven themselves over and over to be respected experts who have too often been overruled by the irresponsible decision-makers.

Last year's legislative effort to improve the CRMC required only replacing the appointees. Unfortunately, our governor has done nothing to accomplish the required appointments.

Please start again and move ahead with the obvious solution. Remove the politically appointed CRMC members. Bring the expert professional staff into the DEM within a newly established Bureau of Coastal Resources Management under a Deputy Director who reports to the DEM Director. As a connection to the public, establish a Community Advisory Board within the Bureau purely to advise the director and Bureau regarding policy initiatives and program improvements.

ECRI supports this without hesitation and appreciates the similar goals of Save the Bay and other environmental advocates. It is noteworthy that some years ago, before the present CRMC was designed, there was a coastal resources group within the DEM which functioned successfully. **Let's do it again, please pass 7996.**

Thanks very much for considering my comments in ECRI's behalf.

Respectfully,



Peter Trafton  
Co-VP for Policy  
The Environment Council of Rhode Island