



Div. of Law Enforcement, Academy Graduation



Div. of Forest Environment, Wildfire Mutual Aid



Office of Water Resources, Shellfish Water Quality



Lifeguard Certification Testing

# FY 2025 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

## RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

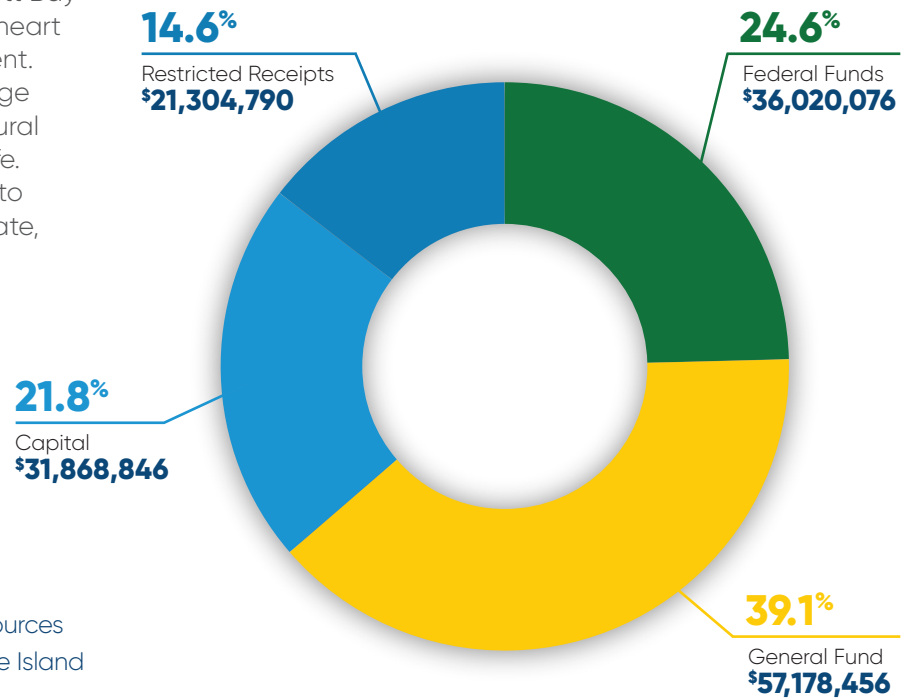
The DEM is the state's chief steward of Narragansett Bay and many other natural resources that are at the heart of Rhode Island's economy, culture, and environment. Simply put, our mission is to protect, restore, manage and promote Rhode Island's environment and natural resources to preserve and improve our quality of life. Our strategic plan outlines a clear direction for us to achieve our mission as we continue to grow, innovate, and improve as a department.

### OUR STRATEGIC GOALS ARE TO:

- Take action to counter climate change and its effects, both locally and regionally
- Prioritize diversity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all programs
- Protect and restore our environment to create greener, healthier communities
- Protect and improve water quality
- Conserve, promote, and steward our natural resources
- Promote and sustain outdoor recreation in Rhode Island
- Expand and promote local agricultural and seafood industries
- Demonstrate statewide leadership in organizational excellence and customer service

The Department consists of 18 separate divisions that oversee the management and maintenance of all the state-owned public parks, management areas, permitting of complex environmental projects, dams, fishing and wildlife areas, bike paths, beaches, coastal areas, and marine resources within the state.

The vision for this budget request is closely aligned with Governor McKee's priorities and sets cost-effective, yet broad and aggressive goals, for DEM to be a state leader on climate change and sustainability; modernize protection of our environment; support all Rhode Islanders with the opportunity to get outdoors and enjoy our beautiful facilities and programs; continue to support and grow Rhode Island's thriving natural resources economy; and develop the next generation of environmental leaders, both inside and outside DEM.



### BUDGET ALLOCATIONS BY FUNDING SOURCE

FUNDING SOURCE	FY 2024 ENACTED	FY 2024 GOV RECOMMENDED	FY 2025 GOV RECOMMENDED
General Revenue	\$58,678,560	\$57,925,657	\$57,178,456
Federal Funds	\$31,088,283	\$38,313,152	\$36,020,076
Capital	\$20,236,754	\$19,710,569	\$31,868,846
Restricted Receipts	\$17,806,478	\$21,065,302	\$21,304,790
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$127,810,075</b>	<b>\$137,014,680</b>	<b>\$146,372,168</b>



dem.ri.gov

riparks.ri.gov

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1. A bicyclist passes a RI State Park staff person mowing grass along the East Bay Bike Path. 2. A farmer holds up a bag of RI Grown crops for sale at the weekly Goddard Memorial Farmers Market. 3. Volunteers and state biologists at a goose banding program led by DEM's Division of Fish & Wildlife.

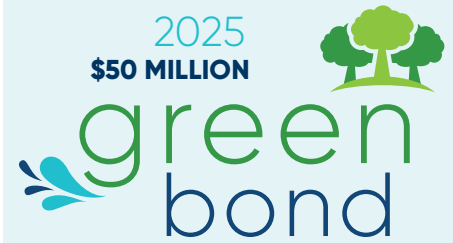
## FY 2025 RHODE ISLAND DEM BUDGET INITIATIVES:

**STRENGTHENING RI PARKS:** An increase of twelve additional FTE positions to support RI state park facilities and operations. The DEM Division of Parks manages over 8,200 acres of land that attract upwards of nine million visitors annually and hosts high-profile national and international events such as the Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals. Each year, our parks contribute an estimated \$312 million of economic output and support over 3,700 jobs. Parks employees take pride in welcoming visitors to clean, well-maintained facilities but are hampered by low staffing levels, expanded responsibilities, increased visitor use, and longer outdoor recreation seasons. This request reallocates existing funds for additional FTE positions and converts some existing seasonal jobs into permanent roles to meet departmental goals and visitor expectations.

**COMBATING LITTER:** Litter, both intentional and unintentional, is often the result of improper trash disposal and negatively impacts the environment and public health. Supported by a \$100,000 line item proposed by Governor McKee, the program continues the Governor's and First Lady's Litter-Free Rhode Island initiative, which launched in 2022. The campaign supports environmental stewardship and includes grants for volunteer cleanups and beautification projects to improve the appearance of our neighborhoods and our scenic and recreational areas. Improving the appearance of our neighborhoods and our scenic and recreational areas improves our quality of life and business climate.

**GROWING OUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM:** This proposal holds steady funding towards the successful LASA Grant Program, which provides grants to small businesses to help strengthen our local food system. Since the COVID pandemic, DEM has steered the program to prioritize building capacity for markets connecting local farms and fishers with food-insecure communities and supporting agriculture producers and fishers who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color – along with developing small food businesses. An evaluation of 27 former LASA grantees showed 84 new jobs created, \$2.5 million of new funding outside LASA, and \$5.05 million in increased sales. The proposed budget also recommends \$100,000 to support the Seafood Marketing Collaborative which supports local fishermen and small businesses by raising consumer awareness and consumption of locally fished species. Growing Rhode Island's local food economy benefits all Rhode Islanders, enhances Rhode Island's environment, and celebrates the state's unique food cultures and landscape.

**PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH:** Mosquito bites are more than annoying; they can cause serious diseases such as Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus. Although extremely rare in humans, EEE is one of the most severe mosquito-transmitted diseases in the United States, with an approximately 30% mortality rate and significant brain damage in most survivors. This initiative invests \$200,000 in mosquito surveillance to provide the public with reliable, scientifically-based information and make informed decisions to reduce risk.



## FY2025 BUDGET PROPOSAL

**Port of Davisville Infrastructure at Quonset: \$20 million** to make infrastructure improvements at the port, including the development of roads for oversized freight vehicles to access a new terminal and the completion of space for cargo to be offloaded. These projects position the port to accommodate offshore wind project components and logistics staging.

**Municipal Resiliency: \$10 million** for financial assistance to help local communities restore and improve resiliency of vulnerable coastal habitats, river and stream floodplains, and infrastructure. These funds are expected to leverage significant matching funds to support local programs to improve community resiliency and public safety in the face of increased flooding, major storm events, and environmental degradation.

**Newport Cliff Walk: \$8 million** to restore or improve the resiliency of the historic tourism infrastructure of the Newport Cliff Walk.

**Brownfields: \$5 million** for matching grants to clean up former industrial sites or "brownfields" so they may revitalize our neighborhoods, be returned to tax rolls, and create jobs.

**Local Recreation: \$5 million** for matching grants to create new and improve existing community parks and recreation facilities.

**Coastal Resiliency and Public Access Projects: \$2 million** for matching grants to restore or improve the resiliency of vulnerable coastal habitats and restore rivers and stream floodplains. These funds are expected to leverage significant matching funds to support local programs to improve community resiliency and public safety in the face of increased flooding, major storm events, and environmental degradation.