



Craig Marr, Chairman
Town of Charlestown
Economic Improvement Commission
4540 South County Trail
Charlestown, Rhode Island 02813

February 3, 2022

BY EMAIL & REGULAR MAIL

Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi
Representative Terri Cortvriend
Representative Blake A. Filippi
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Shoreline Access HB 5469

To the Speaker, Representatives Cortvriend and Filippi:

On behalf of myself and the members of the Town of Charlestown's Economic Improvement Commission, we are writing to express our support of HB 5469. This bill as written appropriately considers rights of the general public and shoreline property owners.

Our support of HB 5469 as written relates to the EIC mission to:

- provide useful tools that support the existing businesses in Charlestown,
- help existing businesses compete in business sectors that most suit the town's coastal setting, and
- recognize that the town's most valuable assets are our natural resources and looks for new businesses that can benefit from these resources without diminishing them.

An overwhelming percentage of our small businesses rely on seasonal revenue received from our visitors and second home owners.

At present, a growing preponderance of "no trespassing" and "private property" signage and abandoned furniture/debris strewn on the beach to 'claim' property lining the Charlestown shoreline gives a mistaken impression that visitors and taxpayers may not use the beach (to walk and/or swim from and sit on).

These signs are resulting in the perception that Charlestown's beaches are not only unfriendly and unwelcoming, but also overcrowded. Security guards and property owners continue to threaten, intimidate and frighten beach goers off the Rhode Island shore, further escalating tension and exacerbating the overcrowding of our town and state beaches.

The EIC is charged with helping to provide our small businesses and service providers with a natural resource – the beach – so that restaurants, shops, hotels, food stores and healthcare services – can operate throughout the year, sustained by the revenue earned during the second and third quarters.

These businesses, by definition, do not diminish our greatest asset, but enhance the enjoyment of it.

We appreciate your consideration of the economic consequences of state legislation that privatizes shoreline access.

As you are aware, tourism provides the third largest income for the state. Rhode Island was only just awarded a \$10MM grant from the federal government for promoting our natural resources. We are curious to see how this money will be used.

The public's right to enjoy the shore must remain as stated in our Constitution so our state stays true to its name, the Ocean State.

Sincerely,



Craig Marr

CC.:

Additional Shoreline Access Committee Members:

Michael Rubin, Esq.

Jeffrey Willis, Coastal Resources Management Council

David Splaine, Rhode Island Realtors Association

Julia Wyman, Marine Affairs Institute and RI Sea Grant, Roger Williams College

Dennis Nixon, Marine Affairs, University of Rhode Island

Jonathan Stone, Save the Bay, Executive Director

Mark P. McKenney, Esq.

Mark Boyer, RI Society of Professional Land Surveyors

EIC Members:

Michael J. Chambers

Jane T. Davis

Jane W. Glander

Alexandra Lehmann

Paula A. Orsini

Lorna Persson

Deborah Carney, Town Council Liaison