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THE FOUNDATION FOR BIOETHICS IN TECHNOLOGY

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE RESOLUTION S3225
RESOLUTION CREATING A SPECIAL JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY
SLUDGE MANAGEMENT IN RHODE ISLAND**

May 5, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Commerce
Attn: Judy Sullivan, Committee Clerk
401-222-2381
slegislation@rilegislature.gov

From: The Foundation for Bioethics in Technology
Re: Support for S3225 — Sludge Management Study Commission

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Foundation for Bioethics in Technology respectfully submits this testimony **in support of Senate Resolution S3225**.

This resolution represents an important step toward a coordinated, statewide evaluation of sludge management and emerging waste technologies. It also presents an opportunity to address a central issue the Foundation encounters repeatedly in Rhode Island: the absence of clear, accessible pathways for informed public understanding and consent.

Sludge management intersects with air quality, water systems, coastal oversight, infrastructure, and municipal impacts. Accordingly, responsibility is distributed across multiple agencies, including the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and the Coastal Resources Management Council.

While this structure reflects subject-matter specialization, it can also result in diffusion of accountability, where no single entity provides a complete, accessible picture to the public.

The Foundation has observed in recent Rhode Island proceedings that residents navigating environmental decisions are often required to engage with multiple agencies, each addressing only part of the issue. This creates a situation where the public is expected to understand a system that is not presented in a unified or transparent way.

From a bioethics perspective, this is a matter of informed consent.

Informed consent requires clear and accessible information, defined lines of responsibility, transparent monitoring, and meaningful opportunity for public engagement. Without these elements, public participation becomes procedural rather than substantive.

S3225 creates a framework to begin addressing these gaps.

The Foundation respectfully encourages that the commission's work include clear documentation of emissions and byproducts, accessible public reporting, consideration of cumulative impacts, and meaningful inclusion of affected communities.

This resolution is not only about sludge management. It is about establishing a model for coordinated, transparent governance of complex environmental technologies.

For these reasons, The Foundation for Bioethics in Technology respectfully supports Senate Resolution S3225.

Respectfully submitted,



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