



NEW ENGLAND BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

May 7, 2025

To Chairwoman Sosnowski and the members of the Senate Environment & Agriculture Committee

Re: BHA Opposition to RI-2025-S998 – CRMC Reorganization

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting. Our members consider the access to public lands and waters and the protection of our natural resources top priorities, recognizing that both of these things are essential to our participation in, and the perpetuation of, our outdoor traditions.

BHA members hunt for waterfowl, fish for striped bass, rake for quahogs, and enjoy many other pursuits along the 400 miles of Rhode Island shoreline and coastal waters that RI's Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has jurisdiction over. Because of their influence over some of the resources we care most about BHA is frequently involved in CRMC's work. Based on these experiences we have also been involved in efforts to reform and improve CRMC's structure for the last several legislative sessions. We feel strongly that S998 fails to sufficiently address the issues that currently plague CRMC, and as a result **BHA urges the Committee to oppose S998.**

S998 seeks to maintain CRMC's politically appointed council structure, while reducing the number of appointees, changing qualifications, and replacing the DEM Director's ex-officio seat with the Attorney General. While we acknowledge that lowering the quorum requirement *might* improve one of the chronic issues that has plagued CRMC for decades – missed meetings – it will do little to address the plethora of other flaws that BHA and others have brought to the legislature's attention.

At present the relative complexity and volume of CRMC's functions extend far beyond what the General Assembly should reasonably expect a *volunteer* council to undertake on the State's behalf. As a result, BHA urges the Committee, and ultimately the General Assembly, to **oppose S998**, and to consider more comprehensive reform measures, like those proposed in S775, that place responsibility for RI's coastal resources in the hands of full-time experts as a preferable alternative.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

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