



RHODE ISLAND
SALTWATER
ANGLERS
Association



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The Honorable Daniel J. McKee
Governor of Rhode Island
Office of the Governor
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Open Letter Concerns Regarding Coastal Resource Management Council

Honorable Governor McKee:

We welcome you as the 76th Governor of the great State of Rhode Island and with this letter offer our perspective and recommendations concerning the Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC).

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA) represents over 7,500 recreational anglers and 28 affiliate clubs in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Our members spend countless hours along the coast of Rhode Island fishing and enjoying the outdoors. We are not political in nature and we only want what is best for this great asset that we have been blessed with – our marine environment.

That is why we have become increasingly concerned about actions by the RI Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC). These actions include some which have received much coverage by the media, such as the decision in the Ballard's Marina case on Block Island and some which are not as widely known such as the decisions in the South Fork Wind Farm and the Seapowet Marsh aquaculture application. In our opinion these decisions all have one thing in common, they favor development over existing uses and preservation of the marine environment.

This trend is concerning in general, but especially so when considering that the CRMC was established "to preserve, protect, develop, and where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state for this and succeeding generations...". It appears to us that the CRMC at a Council level is functioning to allow development as their main goal with preservation of the environment and existing uses as a secondary thought.

In the case of the South Fork Wind project the full Council voted against staff recommendations and did not even require the developer to avoid critical habitat during construction or provide mitigation funds into an account to be controlled by fishermen. This even though the developer's own documents showed that sound pressure during construction will kill invertebrates, finfish, and larvae for miles in all directions.

The CRMC staff includes many seasoned marine professionals who understand the RI marine environment and do a good job of evaluating potential impacts of proposed projects. We have no issue with their capabilities or performance. They work however, under the direction of the Council who are more politicians and developers than scientists and engineers.

This causes confusion when staff is unsure if they will be supported by the Council when tough decisions are required. In the case of the South Fork Wind project staff said clearly "...the location of the SFW project on Cox Ledge, an area known for its biological diversity, is in our view one of the worst possible locations within Rhode Island Sound for this project." The Council still pushed ahead with full approval.

First, the composition of the Council, which you inherited, is not reflective of those using our coastal resources in Rhode Island. The issues with the Council are further complicated by the fact that the terms of all Council Members, except for the DEM Director's designee, have expired. We believe that you should appoint new, qualified Council members who have a better understanding of the Rhode Island marine environment and will preserve, protect, and where possible, restore the marine environment in our great State.

The Bay and the ocean are our most important resource and we must protect that resource for future generations. We are here to serve to help you appoint recreational users engaged with our coastal resources.

Thank you for listening to our comments on this very important issue.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Medeiros
President



Richard C. Hittinger
1st Vice President

Cc: Jeffrey Willis, Director, CRMC
Terrence Gray, Director, RIDEM
Ben Goetsch, Aquaculture Coordinator, CRMC
Providence Journal