STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

H O U S E   R E S O L U T I O N

CREATING A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO MAKE A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REMEDIES TO THE EROSION OF RHODE ISLAND BEACHES

Introduced By: Representatives Azzinaro, Fogarty, Hull, Tanzi, Spears, Cotter, Cortvriend, Carson, McEntee, and Kennedy

Date Introduced: January 31, 2024

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

WHEREAS, Rhode Island is officially nicknamed the “Ocean State” and has a tidal shoreline on Narragansett Bay and the Atlantic Ocean of more than 400 miles and more than 30 islands within the bay; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island has eight state beaches: Charlestown Breachway, East Beach in Charlestown, East Matunuck in South Kingstown, Misquamicut in Westerly, Roger Wheeler, Scarborough North and South, and Salty Brine in Narragansett; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, visitor spending in Rhode Island totaled $5.3 billion and sustained more than 80,000 jobs, a large portion of which is derived from and influenced by the State's beaches and coastline; and

WHEREAS, The harsh reality is that Rhode Island's beaches are eroding and are in urgent need of protection and restoration; and

WHEREAS, Beach restoration involves various methods including:

• The placement of sand on an eroded beach for the purposes of restoring it as a recreational beach and providing storm protection for upland properties and the preservation of erosion hot spots; and

• Dune stabilization techniques including: importing dredged sand from offshore to build up the dune, planting grasses or other plants to secure the sand, and installing fencing along the dune on both the seaward and landward sides of the dune; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Islanders care deeply about the quality of life and income derived
RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created consisting of nine (9) members; four (4) of whom shall be members of the House, not more than three (3) from the same political party, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; one of whom shall be the Director of the RI Department of Environmental Management, or designee; one of whom shall be the executive director of the Coastal Resources Management Council, or designee; one of whom shall be the Dean of Biological Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island, or designee; one of whom shall be the Commander of the New England Army Corps of Engineers, or designee; and one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the Misquamicut Business Association, or designee.

In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator; provided that, the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader of the political party which is entitled to the appointment, consents to the member of the general public.

The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and cost analysis in order to provide recommendations for remedies to the erosion of Rhode Island beaches.

Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at the call of the Speaker of the House and organize and shall select a chairperson.

Vacancies in said commission shall be filled in like manner as the original appointment.

The membership of said commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

All departments and agencies of the state shall furnish such advice and information, documentary and otherwise, to said commission and its agents as is deemed necessary or desirable by the commission to facilitate the purposes of this resolution.

The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives no later than January 5, 2025, and said commission shall expire on March 5, 2025.
EXPLANATION

BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

HOUSE RESOLUTION

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1 This resolution would create a nine (9) member special legislative study commission
2 whose purpose it would be to study and provide recommendations for remedies to the erosion of
3 Rhode Island beaches, and who would report back to the House no later than January 5, 2025, and
4 whose life would expire on March 5, 2025.

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