

2025 -- H 6326

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LC002888
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2,300,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (DEM) TO TRANSPLANT QUAHOGS INTO NARRAGANSETT BAY AND ESTABLISH A SHELLFISH HATCHERY PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Solomon, Casey, and Bennett

Date Introduced: May 09, 2025

Referred To: House Finance

1 WHEREAS, For decades, the quahog fishery has been in decline, with yearly harvests
2 significantly lower year after year due in part to climate change and reduced nutrients from
3 wastewater treatment plants; and

4 WHEREAS, Recently, Rhode Island shell fishermen have been moving tens of thousands
5 of pounds of quahogs from polluted waters to the cleaner waters of Greenwich Bay in order to
6 reverse the decline in Rhode Island's shellfish harvests and boost future harvests through revenue
7 collected by DEM from environmental violations; and

8 WHEREAS, The relocation helps the clams to flush out any contaminants and be healthy
9 for harvesting in the months to come and to spawn and spread larvae that will help repopulate
10 Narragansett Bay; and

11 WHEREAS, Funding the project to replenish quahog populations and support the
12 struggling quahog fishery falls under the Rhode Island Department of Environmental
13 Management. However, funding for this essential project is extremely limited and is currently
14 scheduled as a voluntary effort, and not expected to draw many participants; and

15 WHEREAS, An allocation of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) to the DEM is
16 necessary to help save the iconic hard-shelled clam from Narragansett Bay and its environs; and

17 WHEREAS, Two million dollars (2,000,000) of the appropriation to the DEM would be
18 used to establish a long-term shellfish hatchery program that would be administered by a
19 nonprofit entity chosen by the DEM, and would only be utilized for the public benefit of the wild

1 shellfish industry; and

2 WHEREAS, The hatchery would have a production capacity of five hundred million
3 (500,000,000) pieces annually; and

4 WHEREAS, On or before September 1, 2025, and every five years thereafter, the DEM
5 would produce specifications to receive bids from nonprofits to conduct the proposed operation
6 of programs to fulfill these requirements; and

7 WHEREAS, The DEM would supervise the program and promulgate rules and
8 regulations related to the operation of the hatchery program; now, therefore be it

9 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of money in the treasury not
10 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2025-2026, the sum of two million three hundred
11 thousand dollars (\$2,300,000) to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management,
12 three hundred thousand (\$300,000) for the transplantation of quahogs into Narragansett Bay and
13 two million (\$2,000,000) of which would be to establish a shellfish hatchery program; and the
14 state controller is hereby authorized and directed to draw their orders upon the general treasurer
15 for the payment of said sum, or so much thereof as may be from time to time required, upon
16 receipt of properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$2,300,000 TO THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT
OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (DEM) TO TRANSPLANT QUAHOGS INTO
NARRAGNSETT BAY AND ESTABLISH A SHELLFISH HATCHERY PROGRAM

- 1 This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$2,300,000 to the Rhode
- 2 Island Department of Environmental Management for the transplantation of quahogs and the
- 3 establishment of a shellfish hatchery program.

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