

2026 -- H 7812

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$3,500,000 FOR THE MESHANTICUT LAKE PAVED
WALKING PATH IN CRANSTON

Introduced By: Representatives Paplauskas, Potter, Fascia, Quattrocchi, Bennett, Handy,
McNamara, and Lima

Date Introduced: February 12, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

1 WHEREAS, Meshanticut Lake, located within Cranston, is the focal point of
2 Meshanticut State Park, a beloved public park that boasts a paved walking path that encircles the
3 12-acre lake; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1910, John M. Dean donated Meshanticut Park and its lake to the
5 Metropolitan Park Commission, coinciding with Cranston's transition from a town to a city. The
6 Metropolitan Park Commission, established in the early 1900s, was responsible for acquiring and
7 managing parklands in Rhode Island; and

8 WHEREAS, The State's park system expanded, and the management of these parks,
9 including Meshanticut Park which was purchased by the State of Rhode Island for \$600, was
10 integrated into the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). This transition ensured
11 that Meshanticut Park became part of the State's portfolio of recreational areas, preserving it for
12 public use and enjoyment; and

13 WHEREAS, In 2021, the DEM estimated that addressing infrastructure needs at the
14 park—including road repairs, erosion control, tree maintenance, and bench installations—would
15 require an investment of between \$2 million and \$2.5 million; and

16 WHEREAS, Cranston, home to 82,000+ people, is the second-largest city within the
17 State of Rhode Island, and Meshanticut Lake walking path is an important recreational amenity
18 enjoyed by its diverse community; and

19 WHEREAS, The paved walking path is highly utilized by thousands of individuals of all

1 ages for activities such as walking, running, cycling, and dog walking, promoting health, well-
2 being, recreation, and community engagement; and

3 WHEREAS, Local youth athletes, including students from Cranston High School West,
4 Cranston High School East, Western Hills Middle School, and participants in the Cranston
5 League for Cranston’s Future (CLCF) youth programs, regularly use the path for training and
6 conditioning, contributing to their physical development and team-building experiences; and

7 WHEREAS, Years of use causing wear and tear, extreme weather conditions, and lack of
8 maintenance have caused cracks, uneven terrain, and hazardous conditions along the paved path,
9 posing safety risks to users and detracting from the park’s overall appeal; and

10 WHEREAS, Investing in the restoration and improvement of the pedestrian pathway;
11 including, but not limited to, resurfacing and structural reinforcements, is essential to ensure safe
12 and equitable access for all members of the community, including individuals with mobility
13 impairments; and

14 WHEREAS, Such upgrades will improve Cranston residents’ quality of life, support local
15 youth athletic programs, and preserve the park as a vital suburban green space for all Rhode
16 Island residents; now, therefore be it

17 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not
18 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2026-2027, the sum of three million five hundred
19 thousand dollars (\$3,500,000) to restore and enhance the Meshanticut Lake paved walking path,
20 ensuring it remains a safe and accessible resource for all users; and the state controller is hereby
21 authorized and directed to draw their orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of said
22 sum, or so much thereof as may be from time to time required, upon receipt of properly
23 authenticated vouchers; and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That members of the public are encouraged to participate in the upcoming
25 hearing to voice their support for this critical community investment.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$3,500,000 FOR THE MESHANTICUT LAKE PAVED
WALKING PATH IN CRANSTON

- 1 This resolution would authorize the appropriation of the sum of \$3,500,000 for the
- 2 Meshanticut Lake paved walking path in Cranston.

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