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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Introduced By: Senator Louis P. DiPalma

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-17.1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-17.1 entitled  
2 "Department of Environmental Management" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **42-17.1-2. Powers and duties.**

4 The director of environmental management shall have the following powers and duties:

5 (1) To supervise and control the protection, development, planning, and utilization of the  
6 natural resources of the state, such resources, including, but not limited to: water, plants, trees, soil,  
7 clay, sand, gravel, rocks and other minerals, air, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish,  
8 shellfish, and other forms of aquatic, insect, and animal life;

9 (2) To exercise all functions, powers, and duties heretofore vested in the department of  
10 agriculture and conservation, and in each of the divisions of the department, such as the promotion  
11 of agriculture and animal husbandry in their several branches, including the inspection and  
12 suppression of contagious diseases among animals; the regulation of the marketing of farm  
13 products; the inspection of orchards and nurseries; the protection of trees and shrubs from injurious  
14 insects and diseases; protection from forest fires; the inspection of apiaries and the suppression of  
15 contagious diseases among bees; the prevention of the sale of adulterated or misbranded  
16 agricultural seeds; promotion and encouragement of the work of farm bureaus, in cooperation with  
17 the University of Rhode Island, farmers' institutes, and the various organizations established for  
18 the purpose of developing an interest in agriculture; together with such other agencies and activities

1 as the governor and the general assembly may, from time to time, place under the control of the  
2 department; and as heretofore vested by such of the following chapters and sections of the general  
3 laws as are presently applicable to the department of environmental management and that were  
4 previously applicable to the department of natural resources and the department of agriculture and  
5 conservation or to any of its divisions: chapters 1 through 22, inclusive, as amended, in title 2  
6 entitled "Agriculture and Forestry"; chapters 1 through 17, inclusive, as amended, in title 4 entitled  
7 "Animals and Animal Husbandry"; chapters 1 through 19, inclusive, as amended, in title 20 entitled  
8 "Fish and Wildlife"; chapters 1 through 32, inclusive, as amended, in title 21 entitled "Food and  
9 Drugs"; chapter 7 of title 23, as amended, entitled "Mosquito Abatement"; and by any other general  
10 or public law relating to the department of agriculture and conservation or to any of its divisions or  
11 bureaus;

12 (3) To exercise all the functions, powers, and duties heretofore vested in the division of  
13 parks and recreation of the department of public works by chapters 1, 2, and 5 in title 32 entitled  
14 "Parks and Recreational Areas"; by chapter 22.5 of title 23, as amended, entitled "Drowning  
15 Prevention and Lifesaving"; and by any other general or public law relating to the division of parks  
16 and recreation;

17 (4) To exercise all the functions, powers, and duties heretofore vested in the division of  
18 harbors and rivers of the department of public works, or in the department itself by such as were  
19 previously applicable to the division or the department, of chapters 1 through 22 and sections  
20 thereof, as amended, in title 46 entitled "Waters and Navigation"; and by any other general or public  
21 law relating to the division of harbors and rivers;

22 (5) To exercise all the functions, powers, and duties heretofore vested in the department of  
23 health by chapters 25, 18.9, and 19.5 of title 23, as amended, entitled "Health and Safety"; and by  
24 chapters 12 and 16 of title 46, as amended, entitled "Waters and Navigation"; by chapters 3, 4, 5,  
25 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 18, and 19 of title 4, as amended, entitled "Animals and Animal Husbandry"; and  
26 those functions, powers, and duties specifically vested in the director of environmental  
27 management by the provisions of § 21-2-22, as amended, entitled "Inspection of Animals and  
28 Milk"; together with other powers and duties of the director of the department of health as are  
29 incidental to, or necessary for, the performance of the functions transferred by this section;

30 (6) To cooperate with the Rhode Island commerce corporation in its planning and  
31 promotional functions, particularly in regard to those resources relating to agriculture, fisheries,  
32 and recreation;

33 (7) To cooperate with, advise, and guide conservation commissions of cities and towns  
34 created under chapter 35 of title 45 entitled "Conservation Commissions", as enacted by chapter

1 203 of the Public Laws, 1960;

2 (8) To assign or reassign, with the approval of the governor, any functions, duties, or  
3 powers established by this chapter to any agency within the department, except as hereinafter  
4 limited;

5 (9) To cooperate with the water resources board and to provide to the board facilities,  
6 administrative support, staff services, and other services as the board shall reasonably require for  
7 its operation and, in cooperation with the board and the statewide planning program, to formulate  
8 and maintain a long-range guide plan and implementing program for development of major water-  
9 sources transmission systems needed to furnish water to regional and local distribution systems;

10 (10) To cooperate with the solid waste management corporation and to provide to the  
11 corporation such facilities, administrative support, staff services, and other services within the  
12 department as the corporation shall reasonably require for its operation;

13 (11) To provide for the maintenance of waterways and boating facilities, consistent with  
14 chapter 6.1 of title 46, by: (i) Establishing minimum standards for upland beneficial use and  
15 disposal of dredged material; (ii) Promulgating and enforcing rules for water quality, groundwater  
16 protection, and fish and wildlife protection pursuant to § 42-17.1-24; (iii) Planning for the upland  
17 beneficial use and/or disposal of dredged material in areas not under the jurisdiction of the council  
18 pursuant to § 46-23-6(2); (iv) Cooperating with the coastal resources management council in the  
19 development and implementation of comprehensive programs for dredging as provided for in §§  
20 46-23-6(1)(ii)(H) and 46-23-18.3; and (v) Monitoring dredge material management and disposal  
21 sites in accordance with the protocols established pursuant to § 46-6.1-5(a)(3) and the  
22 comprehensive program provided for in § 46-23-6(1)(ii)(H); no powers or duties granted herein  
23 shall be construed to abrogate the powers or duties granted to the coastal resources management  
24 council under chapter 23 of title 46, as amended;

25 (12) To establish minimum standards, subject to the approval of the environmental  
26 standards board, relating to the location, design, construction, and maintenance of all sewage  
27 disposal systems;

28 (13) To enforce, by such means as provided by law, the standards for the quality of air, and  
29 water, and the design, construction, and operation of all sewage disposal systems; any order or  
30 notice issued by the director relating to the location, design, construction, or maintenance of a  
31 sewage disposal system shall be eligible for recordation under chapter 13 of title 34. The director  
32 shall forward the order or notice to the city or town wherein the subject property is located and the  
33 order or notice shall be recorded in the general index by the appropriate municipal official in the  
34 land evidence records in the city or town wherein the subject property is located. Any subsequent

1 transferee of that property shall be responsible for complying with the requirements of the order or  
2 notice. Upon satisfactory completion of the requirements of the order or notice, the director shall  
3 provide written notice of the same, which notice shall be similarly eligible for recordation. The  
4 original written notice shall be forwarded to the city or town wherein the subject property is located  
5 and the notice of satisfactory completion shall be recorded in the general index by the appropriate  
6 municipal official in the land evidence records in the city or town wherein the subject property is  
7 located. A copy of the written notice shall be forwarded to the owner of the subject property within  
8 five (5) days of a request for it, and, in any event, shall be forwarded to the owner of the subject  
9 property within thirty (30) days after correction;

10 (14) To establish minimum standards for the establishment and maintenance of salutary  
11 environmental conditions, including standards and methods for the assessment and the  
12 consideration of the cumulative effects on the environment of regulatory actions and decisions,  
13 which standards for consideration of cumulative effects shall provide for: (i) Evaluation of potential  
14 cumulative effects that could adversely affect public health and/or impair ecological functioning;  
15 (ii) Analysis of other matters relative to cumulative effects as the department may deem appropriate  
16 in fulfilling its duties, functions, and powers; which standards and methods shall only be applicable  
17 to ISDS systems in the town of Jamestown in areas that are dependent for water supply on private  
18 and public wells, unless broader use is approved by the general assembly. The department shall  
19 report to the general assembly not later than March 15, 2008, with regard to the development and  
20 application of the standards and methods in Jamestown;

21 (15) To establish and enforce minimum standards for permissible types of septage,  
22 industrial-waste disposal sites, and waste-oil disposal sites;

23 (16) To establish minimum standards, subject to the approval of the environmental  
24 standards board, for permissible types of refuse disposal facilities; the design, construction,  
25 operation, and maintenance of disposal facilities; and the location of various types of facilities;

26 (17) To exercise all functions, powers, and duties necessary for the administration of  
27 chapter 19.1 of title 23 entitled "Rhode Island Hazardous Waste Management Act";

28 (18) To designate, in writing, any person in any department of the state government or any  
29 official of a district, county, city, town, or other governmental unit, with that official's consent, to  
30 enforce any rule, regulation, or order promulgated and adopted by the director under any provision  
31 of law; provided, however, that enforcement of powers of the coastal resources management  
32 council shall be assigned only to employees of the department of environmental management,  
33 except by mutual agreement or as otherwise provided in chapter 23 of title 46;

34 (19) To issue and enforce the rules, regulations, and orders as may be necessary to carry

1 out the duties assigned to the director and the department by any provision of law; and to conduct  
2 investigations and hearings and to issue, suspend, and revoke licenses as may be necessary to  
3 enforce those rules, regulations, and orders. Any license suspended under the rules, regulations,  
4 and/or orders shall be terminated and revoked if the conditions that led to the suspension are not  
5 corrected to the satisfaction of the director within two (2) years; provided that written notice is  
6 given by certified mail, return receipt requested, no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of  
7 termination.

8 Notwithstanding the provisions of § 42-35-9 to the contrary, no informal disposition of a  
9 contested licensing matter shall occur where resolution substantially deviates from the original  
10 application unless all interested parties shall be notified of the proposed resolution and provided  
11 with opportunity to comment upon the resolution pursuant to applicable law and any rules and  
12 regulations established by the director;

13 (20) To enter, examine, or survey, at any reasonable time, places as the director deems  
14 necessary to carry out the director's responsibilities under any provision of law subject to the  
15 following provisions:

16 (i) For criminal investigations, the director shall, pursuant to chapter 5 of title 12, seek a  
17 search warrant from an official of a court authorized to issue warrants, unless a search without a  
18 warrant is otherwise allowed or provided by law;

19 (ii)(A) All administrative inspections shall be conducted pursuant to administrative  
20 guidelines promulgated by the department in accordance with chapter 35 of this title;

21 (B) A warrant shall not be required for administrative inspections if conducted under the  
22 following circumstances, in accordance with the applicable constitutional standards:

23 (I) For closely regulated industries;

24 (II) In situations involving open fields or conditions that are in plain view;

25 (III) In emergency situations;

26 (IV) In situations presenting an imminent threat to the environment or public health, safety,  
27 or welfare;

28 (V) If the owner, operator, or agent in charge of the facility, property, site, or location  
29 consents; or

30 (VI) In other situations in which a warrant is not constitutionally required.

31 (C) Whenever it shall be constitutionally or otherwise required by law, or whenever the  
32 director in the director's discretion deems it advisable, an administrative search warrant, or its  
33 functional equivalent, may be obtained by the director from a neutral magistrate for the purpose of  
34 conducting an administrative inspection. The warrant shall be issued in accordance with the

1 applicable constitutional standards for the issuance of administrative search warrants. The  
2 administrative standard of probable cause, not the criminal standard of probable cause, shall apply  
3 to applications for administrative search warrants;

4 (I) The need for, or reliance upon, an administrative warrant shall not be construed as  
5 requiring the department to forfeit the element of surprise in its inspection efforts;

6 (II) An administrative warrant issued pursuant to this subsection must be executed and  
7 returned within ten (10) days of its issuance date unless, upon a showing of need for additional  
8 time, the court orders otherwise;

9 (III) An administrative warrant may authorize the review and copying of documents that  
10 are relevant to the purpose of the inspection. If documents must be seized for the purpose of  
11 copying, and the warrant authorizes the seizure, the person executing the warrant shall prepare an  
12 inventory of the documents taken. The time, place, and manner regarding the making of the  
13 inventory shall be set forth in the terms of the warrant itself, as dictated by the court. A copy of the  
14 inventory shall be delivered to the person from whose possession or facility the documents were  
15 taken. The seized documents shall be copied as soon as feasible under circumstances preserving  
16 their authenticity, then returned to the person from whose possession or facility the documents were  
17 taken;

18 (IV) An administrative warrant may authorize the taking of samples of air, water, or soil  
19 or of materials generated, stored, or treated at the facility, property, site, or location. Upon request,  
20 the department shall make split samples available to the person whose facility, property, site, or  
21 location is being inspected;

22 (V) Service of an administrative warrant may be required only to the extent provided for  
23 in the terms of the warrant itself, by the issuing court.

24 (D) **Penalties.** Any willful and unjustified refusal of right of entry and inspection to  
25 department personnel pursuant to an administrative warrant shall constitute a contempt of court and  
26 shall subject the refusing party to sanctions, which in the court's discretion may result in up to six  
27 (6) months' imprisonment and/or a monetary fine of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) per  
28 refusal;

29 (21) To give notice of an alleged violation of law to the person responsible therefor  
30 whenever the director determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that there is a  
31 violation of any provision of law within the director's jurisdiction or of any rule or regulation  
32 adopted pursuant to authority granted to the director. Nothing in this chapter shall limit the authority  
33 of the attorney general to prosecute offenders as required by law;

34 (i) The notice shall provide for a time within which the alleged violation shall be remedied,

1 and shall inform the person to whom it is directed that a written request for a hearing on the alleged  
2 violation may be filed with the director within twenty (20) days after service of the notice. The  
3 notice will be deemed properly served upon a person if a copy thereof is served the person  
4 personally; or sent by registered or certified mail to the person's last known address; or if the person  
5 is served with notice by any other method of service now or hereafter authorized in a civil action  
6 under the laws of this state. If no written request for a hearing is made to the director within twenty  
7 (20) days of the service of notice, the notice shall automatically become a compliance order;

8 (ii)(A) Whenever the director determines that there exists a violation of any law, rule, or  
9 regulation within the director's jurisdiction that requires immediate action to protect the  
10 environment, the director may, without prior notice of violation or hearing, issue an immediate-  
11 compliance order stating the existence of the violation and the action the director deems necessary.  
12 The compliance order shall become effective immediately upon service or within such time as is  
13 specified by the director in such order. No request for a hearing on an immediate-compliance order  
14 may be made;

15 (B) Any immediate-compliance order issued under this section without notice and prior  
16 hearing shall be effective for no longer than forty-five (45) days; provided, however, that for good  
17 cause shown, the order may be extended one additional period not exceeding forty-five (45) days;

18 (iii) The director may, at the director's discretion and for the purposes of timely and  
19 effective resolution and return to compliance, cite a person for alleged noncompliance through the  
20 issuance of an expedited citation in accordance with § 42-17.6-3(c);

21 (iv) If a person upon whom a notice of violation has been served under the provisions of  
22 this section or if a person aggrieved by any such notice of violation requests a hearing before the  
23 director within twenty (20) days of the service of notice of violation, the director shall set a time  
24 and place for the hearing, and shall give the person requesting that hearing at least five (5) days'  
25 written notice thereof. After the hearing, the director may make findings of fact and shall sustain,  
26 modify, or withdraw the notice of violation. If the director sustains or modifies the notice, that  
27 decision shall be deemed a compliance order and shall be served upon the person responsible in  
28 any manner provided for the service of the notice in this section;

29 (v) The compliance order shall state a time within which the violation shall be remedied,  
30 and the original time specified in the notice of violation shall be extended to the time set in the  
31 order;

32 (vi) Whenever a compliance order has become effective, whether automatically where no  
33 hearing has been requested, where an immediate-compliance order has been issued, or upon  
34 decision following a hearing, the director may institute injunction proceedings in the superior court

1 of the state for enforcement of the compliance order and for appropriate temporary relief, and in  
2 that proceeding, the correctness of a compliance order shall be presumed and the person attacking  
3 the order shall bear the burden of proving error in the compliance order, except that the director  
4 shall bear the burden of proving in the proceeding the correctness of an immediate-compliance  
5 order. The remedy provided for in this section shall be cumulative and not exclusive and shall be  
6 in addition to remedies relating to the removal or abatement of nuisances or any other remedies  
7 provided by law;

8 (vii) Any party aggrieved by a final judgment of the superior court may, within thirty (30)  
9 days from the date of entry of such judgment, petition the supreme court for a writ of certiorari to  
10 review any questions of law. The petition shall set forth the errors claimed. Upon the filing of the  
11 petition with the clerk of the supreme court, the supreme court may, if it sees fit, issue its writ of  
12 certiorari;

13 (22) To impose administrative penalties in accordance with the provisions of chapter 17.6  
14 of this title and to direct that such penalties be paid into the account established by subsection (26);

15 (23) The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation of the provisions of this  
16 chapter:

17 (i) **Director:** The term “director” shall mean the director of environmental management of  
18 the state of Rhode Island or the director’s duly authorized agent;

19 (ii) **Person:** The term “person” shall include any individual, group of individuals, firm,  
20 corporation, association, partnership, or private or public entity, including a district, county, city,  
21 town, or other governmental unit or agent thereof, and in the case of a corporation, any individual  
22 having active and general supervision of the properties of the corporation;

23 (iii) **Service:**

24 (A) Service upon a corporation under this section shall be deemed to include service upon  
25 both the corporation and upon the person having active and general supervision of the properties  
26 of the corporation;

27 (B) For purposes of calculating the time within which a claim for a hearing is made  
28 pursuant to subsection (21)(i), service shall be deemed to be the date of receipt of such notice or  
29 three (3) days from the date of mailing of the notice, whichever shall first occur;

30 (24)(i) To conduct surveys of the present private and public camping and other recreational  
31 areas available and to determine the need for and location of other camping and recreational areas  
32 as may be deemed necessary and in the public interest of the state of Rhode Island and to report  
33 back its findings on an annual basis to the general assembly on or before March 1 of every year;

34 (ii) Additionally, the director of the department of environmental management shall take

1 additional steps, including, but not limited to, matters related to funding as may be necessary to  
2 establish such other additional recreational facilities and areas as are deemed to be in the public  
3 interest;

4 (25)(i) To apply for and accept grants and bequests of funds, with the approval of the  
5 director of administration, from other states, interstate agencies, and independent authorities, and  
6 private firms, individuals, and foundations, for the purpose of carrying out the director's lawful  
7 responsibilities. The funds shall be deposited with the general treasurer in a restricted receipt  
8 account created in the natural resources program for funds made available for that program's  
9 purposes or in a restricted receipt account created in the environmental protection program for  
10 funds made available for that program's purposes. All expenditures from the accounts shall be  
11 subject to appropriation by the general assembly, and shall be expended in accordance with the  
12 provisions of the grant or bequest. In the event that a donation or bequest is unspecified, or in the  
13 event that the trust account balance shows a surplus after the project as provided for in the grant or  
14 bequest has been completed, the director may utilize the appropriated unspecified or appropriated  
15 surplus funds for enhanced management of the department's forest and outdoor public recreation  
16 areas, or other projects or programs that promote the accessibility of recreational opportunities for  
17 Rhode Island residents and visitors;

18 (ii) The director shall submit to the house fiscal advisor and the senate fiscal advisor, by  
19 October 1 of each year, a detailed report on the amount of funds received and the uses made of such  
20 funds;

21 (26) To establish fee schedules by regulation, with the approval of the governor, for the  
22 processing of applications and the performing of related activities in connection with the  
23 department's responsibilities pursuant to subsection (12); chapter 19.1 of title 23, as it relates to  
24 inspections performed by the department to determine compliance with chapter 19.1 and rules and  
25 regulations promulgated in accordance therewith; chapter 18.9 of title 23, as it relates to inspections  
26 performed by the department to determine compliance with chapter 18.9 and the rules and  
27 regulations promulgated in accordance therewith; chapters 19.5 and 23 of title 23; chapter 12 of  
28 title 46, insofar as it relates to water-quality certifications and related reviews performed pursuant  
29 to provisions of the federal Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq.; the regulation and  
30 administration of underground storage tanks and all other programs administered under chapter 12  
31 of title 46 and § 2-1-18 et seq., and chapter 13.1 of title 46 and chapter 13.2 of title 46, insofar as  
32 they relate to any reviews and related activities performed under the provisions of the Groundwater  
33 Protection Act; chapter 24.9 of title 23 as it relates to the regulation and administration of mercury-  
34 added products; and chapter 17.7 of this title, insofar as it relates to administrative appeals of all

1 enforcement, permitting, and licensing matters to the administrative adjudication division for  
2 environmental matters. Two (2) fee ranges shall be required: for “Appeal of enforcement actions,”  
3 a range of fifty dollars (\$50) to one hundred dollars (\$100), and for “Appeal of application  
4 decisions,” a range of five hundred dollars (\$500) to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). The monies  
5 from the administrative adjudication fees will be deposited as general revenues and the amounts  
6 appropriated shall be used for the costs associated with operating the administrative adjudication  
7 division.

8           There is hereby established an account within the general fund to be called the water and  
9 air protection program. The account shall consist of sums appropriated for water and air pollution  
10 control and waste-monitoring programs and the state controller is hereby authorized and directed  
11 to draw his or her orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of the sums, or portions thereof,  
12 as may be required, from time to time, upon receipt by him or her of properly authenticated  
13 vouchers. All amounts collected under the authority of this subsection (26) for the sewage-disposal-  
14 system program and freshwater wetlands program will be deposited as general revenues and the  
15 amounts appropriated shall be used for the purposes of administering and operating the programs.  
16 The director shall submit to the house fiscal advisor and the senate fiscal advisor by January 15 of  
17 each year a detailed report on the amount of funds obtained from fines and fees and the uses made  
18 of the funds;

19           (27) To establish and maintain a list or inventory of areas within the state worthy of special  
20 designation as “scenic” to include, but not be limited to, certain state roads or highways, scenic  
21 vistas, and scenic areas, and to make the list available to the public;

22           (28) To establish and maintain an inventory of all interests in land held by public and  
23 private land trust and to exercise all powers vested herein to ensure the preservation of all identified  
24 lands;

25           (i) The director may promulgate and enforce rules and regulations to provide for the orderly  
26 and consistent protection, management, continuity of ownership and purpose, and centralized  
27 records-keeping for lands, water, and open spaces owned in fee or controlled in full or in part  
28 through other interests, rights, or devices such as conservation easements or restrictions, by private  
29 and public land trusts in Rhode Island. The director may charge a reasonable fee for filing of each  
30 document submitted by a land trust;

31           (ii) The term “public land trust” means any public instrumentality created by a Rhode  
32 Island municipality for the purposes stated herein and financed by means of public funds collected  
33 and appropriated by the municipality. The term “private land trust” means any group of five (5) or  
34 more private citizens of Rhode Island who shall incorporate under the laws of Rhode Island as a

1 nonbusiness corporation for the purposes stated herein, or a national organization such as the nature  
2 conservancy. The main purpose of either a public or a private land trust shall be the protection,  
3 acquisition, or control of land, water, wildlife, wildlife habitat, plants, and/or other natural features,  
4 areas, or open space for the purpose of managing or maintaining, or causing to be managed or  
5 maintained by others, the land, water, and other natural amenities in any undeveloped and relatively  
6 natural state in perpetuity. A private land trust must be granted exemption from federal income tax  
7 under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) [26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3)] within two (2) years of its  
8 incorporation in Rhode Island or it may not continue to function as a land trust in Rhode Island. A  
9 private land trust may not be incorporated for the exclusive purpose of acquiring or accepting  
10 property or rights in property from a single individual, family, corporation, business, partnership,  
11 or other entity. Membership in any private land trust must be open to any individual subscribing to  
12 the purposes of the land trust and agreeing to abide by its rules and regulations including payment  
13 of reasonable dues;

14 (iii)(A) Private land trusts will, in their articles of association or their bylaws, as  
15 appropriate, provide for the transfer to an organization, created for the same or similar purposes, of  
16 the assets, lands and land rights, and interests held by the land trust in the event of termination or  
17 dissolution of the land trust;

18 (B) All land trusts, public and private, will record in the public records, of the appropriate  
19 towns and cities in Rhode Island, all deeds, conservation easements, or restrictions or other interests  
20 and rights acquired in land and will also file copies of all such documents and current copies of  
21 their articles of association, their bylaws, and their annual reports with the secretary of state and  
22 with the director of the Rhode Island department of environmental management. The director is  
23 hereby directed to establish and maintain permanently a system for keeping records of all private  
24 and public land trust land holdings in Rhode Island;

25 (29) The director will contact in writing, not less often than once every two (2) years, each  
26 public or private land trust to ascertain: that all lands held by the land trust are recorded with the  
27 director; the current status and condition of each land holding; that any funds or other assets of the  
28 land trust held as endowment for specific lands have been properly audited at least once within the  
29 two-year (2) period; the name of the successor organization named in the public or private land  
30 trust's bylaws or articles of association; and any other information the director deems essential to  
31 the proper and continuous protection and management of land and interests or rights in land held  
32 by the land trust. In the event that the director determines that a public or private land trust holding  
33 land or interest in land appears to have become inactive, the director shall initiate proceedings to  
34 effect the termination of the land trust and the transfer of its lands, assets, land rights, and land

1 interests to the successor organization named in the defaulting trust's bylaws or articles of  
2 association or to another organization created for the same or similar purposes. Should such a  
3 transfer not be possible, then the land trust, assets, and interest and rights in land will be held in  
4 trust by the state of Rhode Island and managed by the director for the purposes stated at the time  
5 of original acquisition by the trust. Any trust assets or interests other than land or rights in land  
6 accruing to the state under such circumstances will be held and managed as a separate fund for the  
7 benefit of the designated trust lands;

8 (30) Consistent with federal standards, issue and enforce such rules, regulations, and orders  
9 as may be necessary to establish requirements for maintaining evidence of financial responsibility  
10 for taking corrective action and compensating third parties for bodily injury and property damage  
11 caused by sudden and non-sudden accidental releases arising from operating underground storage  
12 tanks;

13 (31) To enforce, by such means as provided by law, the standards for the quality of air, and  
14 water, and the location, design, construction, and operation of all underground storage facilities  
15 used for storing petroleum products or hazardous materials; any order or notice issued by the  
16 director relating to the location, design, construction, operation, or maintenance of an underground  
17 storage facility used for storing petroleum products or hazardous materials shall be eligible for  
18 recordation under chapter 13 of title 34. The director shall forward the order or notice to the city or  
19 town wherein the subject facility is located, and the order or notice shall be recorded in the general  
20 index by the appropriate municipal officer in the land evidence records in the city or town wherein  
21 the subject facility is located. Any subsequent transferee of that facility shall be responsible for  
22 complying with the requirements of the order or notice. Upon satisfactory completion of the  
23 requirements of the order or notice, the director shall provide written notice of the same, which  
24 notice shall be eligible for recordation. The original, written notice shall be forwarded to the city  
25 or town wherein the subject facility is located, and the notice of satisfactory completion shall be  
26 recorded in the general index by the appropriate municipal official in the land evidence records in  
27 the city or town wherein the subject facility is located. A copy of the written notice shall be  
28 forwarded to the owner of the subject facility within five (5) days of a request for it, and, in any  
29 event, shall be forwarded to the owner of the subject facility within thirty (30) days after correction;

30 (32) To manage and disburse any and all funds collected pursuant to § 46-12.9-4, in  
31 accordance with § 46-12.9-5, and other provisions of the Rhode Island Underground Storage Tank  
32 Financial Responsibility Act, as amended;

33 (33) To support, facilitate, and assist the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, as  
34 appropriate and/or as necessary, in order to accomplish the important public purposes of the survey

1 in gathering and maintaining data on Rhode Island natural history; making public presentations and  
2 reports on natural history topics; ranking species and natural communities; monitoring rare species  
3 and communities; consulting on open-space acquisitions and management plans; reviewing  
4 proposed federal and state actions and regulations with regard to their potential impact on natural  
5 communities; and seeking outside funding for wildlife management, land management, and  
6 research;

7 (34) To promote the effective stewardship of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams including,  
8 but not limited to, collaboration with watershed organizations and associations of lakefront property  
9 owners on planning and management actions that will prevent and mitigate water quality  
10 degradation, reduce the loss of native habitat due to infestation of non-native species, abate  
11 nuisance conditions that result from excessive growth of algal or non-native plant species as well  
12 as promote healthy freshwater riverine ecosystems;

13 (35) In implementing the programs established pursuant to this chapter, to identify critical  
14 areas for improving service to customers doing business with the department, and to develop and  
15 implement strategies to improve performance and effectiveness in those areas. Key aspects of a  
16 customer-service program shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following  
17 components:

18 (i) Maintenance of an organizational unit within the department with the express purpose  
19 of providing technical assistance to customers and helping customers comply with environmental  
20 regulations and requirements;

21 (ii) Maintenance of an employee training program to promote customer service across the  
22 department;

23 (iii) Implementation of a continuous business process evaluation and improvement effort,  
24 including process reviews to encourage development of quality proposals; ensure timely and  
25 predictable reviews; and result in effective decisions and consistent follow up and implementation  
26 throughout the department; and publish an annual report on such efforts;

27 (iv) Creation of a centralized location for the acceptance of permit applications and other  
28 submissions to the department;

29 (v) Maintenance of a process to promote, organize, and facilitate meetings prior to the  
30 submission of applications or other proposals in order to inform the applicant on options and  
31 opportunities to minimize environmental impact; improve the potential for sustainable  
32 environmental compliance; and support an effective and efficient review and decision-making  
33 process on permit applications related to the proposed project;

34 (vi) Development of single permits under multiple authorities otherwise provided in state

1 law to support comprehensive and coordinated reviews of proposed projects. The director may  
2 address and resolve conflicting or redundant process requirements in order to achieve an effective  
3 and efficient review process that meets environmental objectives; and

4 (vii) Exploration of the use of performance-based regulations coupled with adequate  
5 inspection and oversight, as an alternative to requiring applications or submissions for approval  
6 prior to initiation of projects;

7 (36) To formulate and promulgate regulations requiring any dock or pier longer than twenty  
8 feet (20') and located on a freshwater lake or pond to be equipped with reflective materials, on all  
9 sides facing the water, of an appropriate width and luminosity such that it can be seen by operators  
10 of watercraft;

11 (37) To temporarily waive any control or prohibition respecting the use of a fuel or fuel  
12 additive required or regulated by the department if the director finds that:

13 (i) Extreme or unusual fuel or fuel additive supply circumstances exist in the state or the  
14 New England region that prevent the distribution of an adequate supply of the fuel or fuel additive  
15 to consumers;

16 (ii) Extreme or unusual fuel or fuel additive supply circumstances are the result of a natural  
17 disaster, an act of God, a pipeline or refinery equipment failure, or another event that could not  
18 reasonably have been foreseen; and

19 (iii) It is in the public interest to grant the waiver.

20 Any temporary waiver shall be made in writing and shall be effective for twenty (20)  
21 calendar days; provided, that the director may renew the temporary waiver, in writing, if it is  
22 deemed necessary; and

23 (38)(i) To designate by rule certain waters of the state as shellfish or marine life project  
24 management areas for the purpose of enhancing the cultivation and growth of marine species,  
25 managing the harvest of marine species, facilitating the conduct by the department of experiments  
26 in planting, cultivating, propagating, managing, and developing any and all kinds of marine life,  
27 and any other related purpose.

28 (ii) Any such designation shall be by reference to fixed landmarks and include an explicit  
29 description of the area to be designated.

30 (iii) Once so designated, the director may adopt rules and regulations addressing  
31 restrictions on the quantities, types, or sizes of marine species that may be taken in any individual  
32 management area, the times during which marine species may be taken, the manner or manners in  
33 that marine species may be taken, the closure of such area to the taking of marine species, or any  
34 other specific restrictions as may be deemed necessary. Such rules shall be exempt from the

1 requirements of §§ 42-35-2.7, 42-35-2.8, and 42-35-2.9.

2 (iv) The director, upon the designation of a management area, may place any stakes,  
3 bounds, buoys, or markers with the words “Rhode Island department of environmental  
4 management” plainly marked on them, as will approximate the management area. Failure to place  
5 or maintain the stakes, bounds, buoys, or markers shall not be admissible in any judicial or  
6 administrative proceeding.

7 (v) Nothing in this section shall prevent the director from implementing emergency rules  
8 pursuant to § 42-35-2.10; and

9 (39)(i) To establish an agricultural restricted receipt account. Any agricultural fees  
10 collected under authority of the department, by the division of agriculture, shall be deposited into  
11 the agricultural restricted receipt account established by this subsection and shall be used only for  
12 the authorized purposes established for the restricted receipt account, as a result of the procedure  
13 set forth in subsection (39)(ii) of this section.

14 (ii) The division of agriculture shall establish an advisory committee to assist it in  
15 determining suggested uses of the funds.

16 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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LC004199  
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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

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1           This act would establish an agricultural restricted receipt account within the department of  
2 environmental management. An advisory committee would be established to determine suggested  
3 uses of the funds in said account.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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LC004199  
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