

2014 -- S 3116

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION

**REAFFIRMING THAT RHODE ISLAND'S MARINE FISHERIES WARRANT THE STATE'S
CONTINUED STRONG SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT**

Introduced By: Senators Sosnowski, Algieri, and Goldin

Date Introduced: June 17, 2014

Referred To: Placed on the Senate Consent Calendar

1 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's marine fisheries are among the state's most valuable natural
2 assets, and serve as a vital part of our heritage, culture, and economy; and

3 WHEREAS, Rhode Island's marine fisheries help to sustain the people of Rhode Island,
4 as a source of food, recreation, employment, and income; and

5 WHEREAS, The total value of sales from commercially landed species landed in Rhode
6 Island is approximately \$200 million annually, and the total estimated employment associated
7 with the state's commercial fishing industry is approximately 5,000 jobs; and

8 WHEREAS, Rhode Island exceeds all other states with regard to the value of commercial
9 landings of squid, butterfish, scup, and fluke, and is among the top five states with regard to the
10 value of landings of mackerel, monkfish, black sea bass, tilefish, and bluefish; and

11 WHEREAS, Rhode Island offers some of the best saltwater recreational fishing
12 opportunities anywhere in the country, supporting a thriving recreational fishing community
13 involving hundreds of thousands of anglers; and

14 WHEREAS, Expenditures by recreational saltwater fishermen in Rhode Island total
15 about \$179 million annually, generating some \$157 million in sales and \$48 million in income,
16 while supporting nearly 1,300 jobs; and

17 WHEREAS, The Port of Galilee is one of the largest commercial fishing ports on the
18 East Coast, and whereas the state, through the Department of Environmental Management
19 (DEM), has made significant capital improvements to the port, including a recent \$6 million

1 project that will help to stabilize and grow the port for the benefit of the state's commercial
2 fishing industry; and

3 WHEREAS, DEM and the Town of Narragansett, in partnership with the state's
4 recreational and commercial fishing communities, annually host a Galilee Fishing Tournament
5 and Seafood Festival to celebrate and promote Rhode Island's recreational and commercial
6 fishing industries, locally harvested seafood, and the port itself; and

7 WHEREAS, Fishing piers, boat ramps, and other public access sites provide vital
8 opportunities for recreational fishermen; and

9 WHEREAS, The state, through the DEM, has made significant improvements to the
10 fishing pier at Colt State Park, constructed two fishing platforms at Salty Brine Sate Beach,
11 acquired a major stretch of very fishable coastline at Rocky Point in Warwick, and just completed
12 a major renovation of the Galilee Boat Ramp; and

13 WHEREAS, The DEM has partnered with the City of Providence on the Gano Park Boat
14 Launch and is partnering with the City of Pawtucket on the Festival Pier Boat Ramp; and

15 WHEREAS, DEM is partnering with the Coastal Resources Management Council, the
16 University of Rhode Island, Roger Williams University, and a host of stakeholders on the
17 development of a first-ever, comprehensive plan for shellfish management in Rhode Island; and

18 WHEREAS, DEM and the University of Rhode Island have formally entered into a new
19 partnership – the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Institute – to coordinate marine fisheries science,
20 research, and educational activities of priority importance in Rhode Island; and

21 WHEREAS, Rhode Island is poised to boost the status of Rhode Island seafood in the
22 marketplace via a promotional campaign launched by the Rhode Island Seafood Marketing
23 Collaborative and involving a newly established Rhode Island Seafood brand, or logo, that will
24 serve to identify and promote seafood products from the Ocean State; and

25 WHEREAS, DEM, as the lead state agency responsible for marine fisheries in Rhode
26 Island, undertakes a range of programs and activities focused on resource conservation and
27 industry support; and

28 WHEREAS, DEM has formally adopted a set of Principles and Policies Governing
29 Marine Fisheries Management in Rhode Island, with key focal points being economic growth and
30 development, healthy resources, strong and stable fisheries, good science, effective management,
31 and industry support; and

32 WHEREAS, DEM is committed to balancing and supporting the interests of: those who
33 harvest fishery resources for personal use and enjoyment as well as the businesses that support
34 such uses, those who rely upon the commercial fishing industry as a source of food, those

1 engaged in the commercial fishing industry, and those who wish to enter the commercial fishing
2 industry; and

3 WHEREAS, DEM is committed to providing fair and equitable access and harvest
4 opportunities for Rhode Island's recreational fishing community; and

5 WHEREAS, DEM is committed to supporting the business interests of Rhode Island's
6 commercial fishermen, and the economic interests of the Rhode Island commercial fishing
7 industry as a whole, by enhancing flexibility and opportunity, minimizing regulatory constraints,
8 and enabling participants to fish in an efficient, cost-effective, safe, economically viable, and
9 environmentally and ecologically sound manner; and

10 WHEREAS, The many benefits and opportunities associated with Rhode Island's marine
11 fisheries are juxtaposed with a mounting series of challenges, generally involving the inherent
12 complexity of fisheries management, the dynamic nature of the marine ecosystem, climate
13 change, overlapping state and federal jurisdictional issues, allocation issues, and the diverse
14 interests of stakeholders; and

15 WHEREAS, The broad array of benefits, opportunities, and challenges associated with
16 marine fisheries in Rhode Island engenders both a strong sense of pride and an equally strong
17 sense of responsibility; now, therefore be it

18 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
19 hereby declares and reaffirms that Rhode Island's marine fisheries warrant the state's continued
20 strong support and investment with a view to maintaining healthy, productive, and sustainable
21 marine fishery resources, strengthening marine fisheries as a major economic engine for the state,
22 and preserving a way of life that is at our core; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
24 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to the Director of the Rhode Island Department of
25 Environmental Management.

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