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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2015

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ACTUAL AND
POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF OCEAN ACIDIFICATION ON RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Senators Felag, Walaska, and Sosnowski

Date Introduced: March 18, 2015

Referred To: Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs

1 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission to be known as "The Rhode Island
2 Commission on Ocean Acidification" be and the same is hereby created consisting of fifteen (15)
3 members: three (3) of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives, not more than
4 two (2) from the same political party to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom
5 shall be the Chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee, three (3) of
6 whom shall be members of the Senate, not more than two (2) from the same political party, to be
7 appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be the Chair of the Senate
8 Environment and Agriculture Committee, one of whom shall be the Director of the Department of
9 Environmental Management, or designee; one of whom shall be the Chair of the Coastal
10 Resources Management Council, or designee; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of
11 Save the Bay, or designee; two (2) of whom shall be persons who fish commercially, one of
12 whom shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, and one of whom shall be appointed by
13 the Speaker of the House; two (2) of whom shall be representatives of business, one of whom
14 shall be appointed by the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, and one of whom shall be
15 appointed by the Newport Chamber of Commerce; and two (2) of whom shall be representatives
16 of higher education, one of whom shall be appointed by the Rhode Island Board of Governors for
17 Higher Education, and one of whom shall be appointed by the President of the University of
18 Rhode Island.

19 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a permanent advisory

1 commission, a legislative study commission, or any commission created by a General Assembly
2 resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a member of the general public to serve in lieu
3 of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or the minority leader of the political party which
4 is entitled to the appointment consents to the member of the general public.

5 The purpose of said commission shall be to study the actual and potential effects of ocean
6 acidification on Rhode Island; to identify the scientific data and knowledge available, as well as
7 the gaps in that data and knowledge, in order to enable the state to craft and prioritize policy and
8 other coordinated responses to ocean acidification; and to develop recommendations on how to
9 respond to and mitigate the adverse effects of ocean acidification in order to increase economic
10 and ecosystem sustainability.

11 To support its purposes, the commission shall have the following duties, including but
12 not limited to:

13 (1) Review and summarize the existing studies, research and programs relevant to ocean
14 acidification pertinent to Rhode Island, including identification of marine species at risk of being
15 impacted by ocean acidification and the anticipated consequences on those marine species and the
16 economies that depend on them.

17 (2) Identify the gaps in research and the monitoring needed in Rhode Island to increase
18 the state's scientific understanding and strengthen the linkage between science and management
19 actions.

20 (3) Develop recommendations for actions to respond to increasing ocean acidification
21 and reduce the harmful effects on Rhode Island's marine resources. Recommendations should
22 first emphasize the use of existing laws and regulations and better coordination of existing
23 policies and programs, and focus on actions that complement, build on, and reinforce existing
24 regional and state activities, rather than creating new programs; secondary recommendations shall
25 include potential legislative or executive actions.

26 (4) Identify opportunities to improve coordination, strengthen existing partnerships, and
27 develop new partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries, levels of government and with
28 nonprofit organizations and private businesses. Recommendations should include examples and
29 options for outreach and communication that will enhance public awareness and understanding of
30 ocean acidification and how to address it.

31 (5) Explore financial strategies that could be made available to governmental entities,
32 nonprofit entities and businesses to assist in implementing the actions identified by the
33 commission to mitigate the harmful effects of ocean acidification on Rhode Island's marine
34 resources.

1 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of the commission shall meet at
2 the call of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate and organize. The respective
3 Chairs of the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee and the House Environment and
4 Natural Resources Committee shall serve as co-chairpersons of the commission.

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

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

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

10 The Joint Committee on Legislative Services is hereby authorized and directed to provide
11 suitable quarters for said commission; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its initial findings to the Governor and the
13 General Assembly no later than December 1, 2015, its final report and recommendations no later
14 than April 1, 2016, and said commission shall expire on July 1, 2016.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY THE ACTUAL AND
POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF OCEAN ACIDIFICATION ON RHODE ISLAND

1 This resolution would create a fifteen (15) member special legislative commission whose
2 purpose it would be to make a comprehensive study of the actual and potential effects of ocean
3 acidification on Rhode Island, and who would report back its initial findings to the Governor and
4 General Assembly no later than December 1, 2015, its final report and recommendations no later
5 than April 1, 2016, and whose life would expire on July 1, 2016.

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