

2023 -- H 6496

LC003172

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2023

JOINT RESOLUTION

CREATING A SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO STUDY AND PROVIDE  
RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ISSUES RELATING TO THE REDUCED CATCH OF  
QUAHOGS IN NARRAGANSETT BAY

Introduced By: Representatives Solomon, and Bennett

Date Introduced: June 07, 2023

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

1 WHEREAS, A quahog is a large, hard-shelled clam, whose shells were used for many  
2 years by the Narragansett people for wampum; and

3 WHEREAS, Native to the Atlantic coast, Quahogs feed on plankton, and plankton feeds  
4 on nitrates, which water treatment plants can't filter out, making quahogs a natural source for  
5 filtering impurities out of the water, as well as being a much sought-after food; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1987, the Rhode Island Legislature designated the quahog to be the  
7 "Rhode Island State Shell" and today, the quahog industry remains a vital part of Rhode Island's  
8 food industry, however, due to simply less clams, it has become a shrinking industry; now,  
9 therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That a special legislative commission be and the same is hereby created  
11 consisting of thirteen (13) members: two (2) of whom shall be members of the Rhode Island  
12 House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; two (2) of whom shall be  
13 members of the Rhode Island Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate; one of  
14 whom shall be the Executive Director of Save the Bay, or designee; one of whom shall be the  
15 Director of the Department of Environmental Management, or designee; one of whom shall be  
16 the Executive Director of the Coastal Resources Management Council, or designee; one of whom  
17 shall be a representative from the University of Rhode Island, to be appointed by the Speaker of  
18 the House; one of whom shall be a representative from Roger Williams University, to be  
19 appointed by the President of the Senate; one of whom shall be the Executive Director of the

1 Narragansett Bay Commission, or designee; one of whom shall be the President of the RI Shell  
2 Fisherman's Association, or designee; one of whom shall be a RI Shell Fisherman, to be  
3 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and one of whom shall be a member of the public, to be  
4 appointed by the President of the Senate.

5 In lieu of any appointment of a member of the legislature to a legislative study  
6 commission, created by a General Assembly resolution, the appointing authority may appoint a  
7 member of the general public to serve in lieu of a legislator, provided that the majority leader or  
8 the minority leader of the political party which is entitled to the appointment consents to the  
9 member of the general public.

10 The purpose of said commission shall be to make a comprehensive study and provide  
11 recommendations on the issues relating to the reduced catch of quahogs in Narragansett Bay  
12 including, but not limited to:

- 13 • Nitrogen depletion;
- 14 • Hypoxic conditions - oxygen deficiency;
- 15 • Changing aquatic life; and
- 16 • Climate change.

17 Forthwith upon passage of this resolution, the members of said commission shall meet at  
18 the call of the Speaker of the House and President of the Senate and shall select co-Chairpersons  
19 from among the legislative members.

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

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

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

25 The Speaker of the House is hereby authorized and directed to provide suitable quarters  
26 for said commission; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the commission shall report its findings to the General Assembly no  
28 later than May 31, 2024, and said commission shall expire on June 30, 2024.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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QUAHOGS IN NARRAGANSETT BAY

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- 1           This resolution would create a thirteen (13) member joint commission whose purpose is  
2 to study and provide recommendations on the issues relating to the reduced catch of quahogs in  
3 Narragansett Bay, and who would report back to the General Assembly by May 31, 2024, and  
4 expire on June 30, 2024.

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