



Rhode Island Shared Water Resources Act (H7884, S2629) Bill Summary

Here in the Northeast, water supply should be a competitive advantage, however, Rhode Island has not yet fulfilled that potential. Despite relatively generous rainfall, Rhode Islanders are facing water shortages in parts of the state. Poor water management policies have led to rivers running dry, failing infrastructure, and inadequate water supply for economic development.

The Coalition for Water Security supports legislation to give Rhode Island the essential elements of responsible and effective water supply policies. The bill focuses on the central elements necessary to provide a safe, reliable water supply to meet our current needs, reduce waste, provide for economic growth and protect our rivers and streams.

Determining Water Availability

To manage our water supply, the state will need to know how much water is available. The Department of Environmental Management is developing a method of estimating the amount that can be withdrawn from groundwater without significantly disrupting aquatic life in nearby streams.

- The bill requires DEM to make these standards into regulations within a year, so the Water Resources Board (WRB) can use them in water supply planning.
- The bill implements current legal requirements that those who use water should report the amount of their use in order to allow for effective.
- The bill updates the current system of reporting installation of new private wells to allow estimates of private demand.

Promoting Efficiency

Water's low cost and the lack of effective incentives to use it efficiently have led to wasteful use particularly in outdoor residential irrigation. This doubling and tripling of summertime water use stresses groundwater supplies when these supplies are at a minimum.

- The bill requires water supply system management plans to set goals to reduce these wasteful summer peaks and reduce system leakage.
- The bill allows water suppliers to implement water efficiency programs by providing revenue stabilization tools to recover their costs when they reduce water sales.
- The bill gives the WRB the necessary authority to ensure compliance with adequate plans, so that state funding is available only to responsible suppliers.
- The bill requires the WRB notify the public when a water supplier is not in compliance.
- The bill strengthens and focuses existing enforcement mechanisms on compliance with plans.

Protecting Water System Reliability

Rhode Island's water systems are aging, and have not been repaired or replaced at the rate necessary to ensure reliability.

- The bill requires users to invest now for necessary repairs to avoid much higher costs for emergency repairs.

The Coalition for Water Security was formed to develop strategic solutions to manage our water and ensure our supply so that Rhode Island residents, businesses, farms and visitors have the water they need and our ecosystems are protected.

www.coalitionforwatersecurity.org



Coalition Partners

Aquidneck Land Trust

Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Clean Water Action

Conservation Law Foundation

Environment Council of Rhode Island

Environment Rhode Island

Grow Smart Rhode Island

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Narrow River Preservation Association

Rhode Island Economic Policy Council

Rhode Island Land Trust Council

Rhode Island Natural History Survey

RI Public Expenditures Council

Sierra Club Rhode Island Chapter

Save The Bay

The Nature Conservancy

Trout Unlimited

Trust for Public Land

Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association