



## **Clean Water, Open Space, and Healthy Communities**

### **2014 Bond Referendum**

Overview and Summary of \$75,000,000 Total Request

#### **Jobs for Green Cities and Resilient Communities - \$35,000,000**

Changing weather conditions are evident in extreme rain events, widespread flooding, rising temperatures, higher tides, and intensifying storms. These conditions threaten public safety, damage public and private property, disrupt economic activity, and degrade water quality in our ponds, rivers, and oceans. According to FEMA, damage in Rhode Island caused by Superstorm Sandy alone required \$39.4 million in support from federal disaster relief programs and cost the state millions more. The net benefit of investments in resilient and safe communities is the economic loss avoided during and after major storm events, and the growth of jobs in industries related to adaptation and flood mitigation. The programs outlined below – from brownfields redevelopment to stormwater infrastructure financing – will provide local communities with tools to address climate change impacts, encourage new business development, ensure local business retention, and protect overall quality of life for residents.

- **Brownfield Remediation for Economic Development - \$5,000,000**
  - To provide 80% matching grants to public, private, and/or non-profit entities for brownfield remediation projects. Cleanup, reinvestment and re-use of these sites creates and attracts jobs, protects the urban environment, removes hazards, prevents sprawl, and reduces the cost of stormwater flooding. The EPA Brownfields program estimates that 7.30 jobs are leveraged per \$100,000 of funding expended on the brownfield remediation process. In addition, economic studies indicate that every brownfield acre “recycled” preserves four acres of open space from being developed. EPA also estimates that brownfield clean-up increases adjacent property values by 2-3%, and several project and state specific studies show that initial public investment in brownfield redevelopment leverages 3 times the private investment, and has a local multiplier impact of 3.8.
  
- **Green Streets & Green Neighborhoods Program - \$4,000,000**
  - To provide up to 70% matching grants of \$500,000 or less for public, private, and/or non-profit entities to install “Green Infrastructure” such as green roofs, rain gardens, vegetated swales, pocket wetlands, green parking, vegetated filter strips, and riparian buffers to address major stormwater issues in their communities. These techniques may be used in combination with conventional infrastructure solutions to address or lessen impacts of runoff quality and quantity, including combined sewer overflows. Investment in green infrastructure will reduce beach closures, shellfish closures,

polluted ponds and rivers, and flooding; build resiliency to extreme weather events; and create green jobs. This investment will support the growth of Rhode Island's \$1.78 billion dollar plant-based industries, and create more sustainable communities that are better able to meet future challenges, especially in the face of a changing climate. Recently completed green infrastructure projects include: Green Streets installation on Water Street in Warren (along with re-constructing sewer line) and Bristol Town Beach bioswale and rain garden plantings to address parking lot runoff (contributing to zero beach closures at these beaches in 2013), Roger Williams Park rain garden and bioswales to reduce stormwater runoff and pond degradation, Fidelity Investments cistern installation in Smithfield to save money on landscape irrigation and reduce runoff, and Kent County Hospital bioswale and rain garden installations to reduce stormwater runoff.

**Working with Nature to Prevent Floods - \$3,000,000**

- To provide grants to public and/or non-profit entities for project design and construction grants for dam repair and/or removal, restoration and/or improved resiliency of vulnerable coastal habitats, and restoration of rivers and stream floodplains. These funds are expected to leverage significant matching funds to support local programs to improve community resiliency and public safety in the face of increased flooding, major storm events, and environmental degradation.

**Local Land Acquisition to Build Resiliency & Natural Buffers - \$3,000,000**

- To provide 50% matching grants to local entities to preserve community character, support smart growth development, ensure clean water supplies, mitigate flooding, and encourage good local planning policy. This program will support cities and towns, land trusts, and non-profit organizations in their protection and acquisition of important natural areas. \$2 million dollars of this bond funding will be prioritized for fee acquisitions or easements along vulnerable rivers, streams, ponds, and shoreline.

**Capital for Clean Water - \$20,000,000**

- The Department of Environmental Management has compiled a list of more than \$1.8 billion dollars of needed clean water infrastructure improvements from municipalities and the Narragansett Bay Commission. Projects range from wastewater treatment upgrades and storm water quality improvements to combined sewer overflow abatement projects. The state's Clean Water Revolving Fund is inadequately capitalized to meet this need or leverage additional federal and private dollars. This funding stream will provide a capital infusion to the State Clean Water Revolving Fund, administered by the Rhode Island Clean Water Finance Agency [RICWFA], in order to increase program capacity for these clean water investments. Each dollar invested in the program allows the RICWFA to loan out \$3 to \$4 to borrowers, thus the \$20 million dollar investment will result in up to \$80 million dollars in loans for water pollution abatement projects.

## **Jobs for the Protection and Enhancement of the State's Water Supplies - \$15,000,000**

Since 1983 the Rhode Island Water Resources Board has administered the Water Facilities Assistance Program (WFAP) to finance up to 50% of design and construction costs for new public water supply facilities. To date, over twenty major system improvements benefiting fourteen water districts have been funded. Aging infrastructure and the need to coordinate major capital improvements has provided an opportunity for the State to continue strategic investments and encourage functional regionalization of water supplies.

- **Bristol County Water Supply - \$12,000,000**
  - The Bristol County Water Authority needs an alternative water supply to replace the vulnerable reservoirs supplies it has as a backup in Massachusetts (as defined in RIGL 46-15.5). This new project will include designing and constructing approximately 7 miles of new pipeline connecting the newly constructed water facilities in Pawtucket, through the City of East Providence, and connecting to Bristol County Water Authority's existing infrastructure, serving almost 100,000 residents. This project is anticipated to be funded 50% from state general revenue bonds and 50% from funds raised locally through the ratepayers of East Providence Water Supply, Bristol County Water Authority, and a smaller amount through the Pawtucket Water Supply Board.
  
- **Interconnection Program - \$3,000,000**
  - The WRB has several interconnections between major water suppliers identified to enhance the interconnectedness between systems for strategic movement of water throughout the State, both for emergency and normal operations. These projects include strategic interconnections between Kent County Water Authority and Quonset Development Corporation and North Kingstown Water (enhancing economic opportunities in Quonset where water supplies are known to be vulnerable); an interconnection between North Kingstown Water and Jamestown Water (to protect against drought and the effects of climate change and sea level rise), and various other interconnections throughout the state. This program will be matched by 50% by the local water suppliers that benefit from their individual projects.

## **Jobs for Farming, Fishing, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation - \$25,000,000**

Tourism is the state's 2nd largest economic engine that supports over 70,000 jobs and annually generates \$2.26 billion for the state's economy, \$5 billion in spending and 9% of all Rhode Island government revenue. Outdoor sports tourism (hunting and fishing), birdwatchers and other wildlife observers generate \$332 million dollars each year. Agriculture is a \$268 million dollar industry in Rhode Island and from 2002-2007 the state saw a 42% increase in the number of farms and a 19% increase in the market value of products sold. The estimated annual value of seafood sales in RI is \$200.9 million, directly supporting over 7,000 jobs. New outdoor recreation and tourism businesses along with food businesses, including food trucks, processing facilities, distribution facilities, and restaurants all benefit from the growth of these sectors.

- **Growing our Local Food Sector - \$500,000**
  - To provide grants through the Department's Local Agriculture and Seafood Act program to farmers and/or non-profit entities for the acquisition, renovation, and construction of

agricultural structures that enhance the viability and profitability of Rhode Island's food system. Projects funded under this program may include the development of production and/or processing infrastructure, direct distribution venues, and on-farm permanently attached equipment to improve profitability. The State is in its inaugural year of this program, currently administering a \$200,000 Grants Program with \$100,000 from State funds and \$100,000 in matching support from the Van Buren and Kendall Foundations, and will leverage further investment to match the Bond amount.

- **Scaling Up: Farmland Acquisition for Active Use** - \$3,000,000
  - This funding will protect the state's working farms and keep that land in the hands of our working farmers. Through the State Land Acquisition Program, DEM will purchase farmland in danger of converting to non-agricultural use, then restrict and affordably sell or lease the land to qualified farmers. Funds from sale of the land to farmers will be returned to the program account for re-use in new projects. This program and funding addresses the greatest challenge facing our growing farming community - land availability - while also meeting more traditional goals of open space and historical farm land protection. The state has lost over 80% of our farmland since 1940 and during the past 25 years has lost a greater percentage of farmland than any other state.
  
- **Supporting the Growth of our Aquaculture Sector** - \$3,200,000
  - For the development of a facility at DEM's Jerusalem property in Narragansett to serve as the base of operations for shellfish management and restoration in Rhode Island. Linked to the priorities and recommendations of the URI led Shellfish Management Planning Initiative, the facility will house DEM's Fish and Wildlife programming, administration, research, and operations and maintenance related to shellfish management and restoration. The facility will also host marine restoration partners such as The Nature Conservancy, Save the Bay, and state universities and serve as the base for aquaculture research, restoration, and aquaculture business sector development. Aquaculture is a growing industry dependent upon clean water and frequent monitoring. Rhode Island currently has 50 aquaculture farms selling over 4.3 million oysters every year. Beyond the food value of shellfish, sound restoration and management of our near-shore ecosystem improves water quality and the ecological health of Narragansett Bay, ensuring the sustainability of many other marine-based sectors in Rhode Island.
  
- **Marine Infrastructure and Pier Development** - \$4,300,000
  - To provide funds for marine infrastructure and pier development at sites critical to Rhode Island's tourism and fishing economy. Saltwater recreational fishing has an annual total economic impact of \$160 million and supports 1,000 jobs. Saltwater recreational fishing is also the state's 8th largest tourism attraction. Funds used for marine development and improvements will be matched 3:1 with federal funds, with landside improvements to be leveraged with local, private, and federal funds. These funds shall be used to:

- Develop a fishing pier and boating access ramp at Rocky Point in Warwick (\$2,000,000)
  - Develop a fishing pier and public restroom facility at India Point (Shooters) in Providence (\$1,300,000)
  - Develop a fishing pier at Green Lane in Portsmouth(\$1,000,000)
- **Park and Management Area Improvement and Development - \$4,000,000**
  - To provide funds to repair and improve Rhode Island’s Park infrastructure. The Department of Environmental Management maintains over fifty state-owned buildings and over 163 miles of paved and un-paved roads in state parks and management areas. Continued investment in these assets will ensure the success and continued growth of our recreation and tourism sectors, which currently generate more than \$2.26 billion for the state's economy. Priority projects include facility upgrades at Colt State Park, Brenton Point, and Fisherman’s Memorial state park; drainage and road improvements within the state’s management areas; demolition of structures at Arcadia, Black Farm, and Chopmist management areas; and the initial phase of Rocky Point development.
- **Land Conservation and Acquisition Program- \$4,000,000**
  - Rhode Island’s beaches, bays, forests, farms, and rivers help to sustain the state’s economy and provide residents with a high quality of life. An investment in land conservation and acquisition enables the tourism industry to thrive, protects the quality of life for all residents, and preserves Rhode Island’s critical habitat resources. This funding will be used to acquire land to fill gaps in state parks and management areas; protect iconic properties that have statewide significance; and for state parks, beaches, and water access points. On average, DEM is able to leverage a 75% match from federal and local sources to match the state’s investment.
- **Lake Recreation and Restoration Fund - \$1,000,000**
  - Rhode Island's landscape includes hundreds of freshwater lakes and ponds covering 20,749 acres. Freshwater facilities and water bodies provide a myriad of outdoor recreational opportunities, support our robust recreational fishing economy, and in many communities serve as drinking water supplies. Forty-two (42) licensed beaches are located on lakes; several of which are associated with state and private campgrounds that draw thousands of visitors to our State. With over 41% of lake acreage in Rhode Island not meeting basic water quality criteria, we must invest in this resource to ensure we have clean water in our lakes and that they can be enjoyed by future generations. This fund will be used to carry out long-term projects to improve water quality in lakes that are priority state recreational assets and to improve access to and recreational opportunities on Rhode Island’s fresh water bodies. Projects to control excessive aquatic invasive plant growth and reduce algal blooms that interfere with recreational uses in lakes are among those anticipated. These funds will be leveraged with partner contributions and in-kind donations. Partners are expected to include lake associations, local landowners, local dam owners and outdoor recreation and conservation organizations. The Department will also seek to match these funds with federal water

quality and restoration funds from the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Environmental Protection Agency.

- **Local Recreation Grants - \$4,000,000**
  - To provide up to 80% matching grant funds to municipalities to meet the ever growing needs for active recreational facilities; projects include development of fields for baseball, soccer, football; tennis courts and playgrounds. State assistance is necessary for municipalities to be able to fund these community enhancement projects that promote active, healthy recreational activities. Examples of recent projects include: Updates to Tucker Field in Cumberland for year round sports recreation (\$200,000 DEM grant) and New tennis courts at Rotary Park in Westerly (\$75,000 DEM grant).
  
- **Distressed Community Recreation Grants – \$1,000,000**
  - To provide 90% matching grants under the distressed communities program for development of parks and parkland acquisition. Eligible communities include Woonsocket, West Warwick, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Cranston, North Providence, and Providence. Notable projects include: ); New tennis courts, restrooms, and concession at Riverpoint Park in West Warwick (\$200,000 DEM grant); Acquisition (3 acres) and development of Higginson Avenue Sports Complex in Central Falls (\$150,000 DEM grant); Development of Roger Williams Park Horticultural Education Center in Providence (\$150,00 DEM grant).