July 21, 2021

The Honorable Daniel J. McKee, Governor
Office of the Governor
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
c/o Anthony J. Silva, Chief of Staff
anthony.j.silva@governor.ri.gov

Dear Governor McKee:

Please allow this letter to serve as formal notice of my resignation as Chair and as a public member of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”) effective today.

In the four years that I have served as Chair of the Council, I have developed a deep appreciation and respect for the expertise and skills of the small, but highly effective CRMC staff, and for the ways in which the Council has carried out its collective objective to preserve, protect, develop, and restore our beautiful, unmatched coastline. The Executive Director and Deputy Director, both present and past, have demonstrated repeatedly their commitment to excellence in their work and fidelity to the standards and policies of our coastal programs. I have learned a great deal through their leadership and passion.

Through our meaningful work over these years, I’ve presided over more than a hundred full Council and subcommittee meetings on matters of great importance to our State. As Chair, my work included balancing the use and protection of public trust resources, reviewing large federal projects for consistency with enforceable State standards, ensuring responsible coastal development, promulgating regulatory changes (including those designed to identify coastal hazards and bolster climate resilience), and effecting procedural reforms.

Importantly, during my time as Chair of the Council, I have helped the agency with succession planning in the face of multiple retirements in senior staff, as well as with the transition from one of the State’s longest serving executive directors to a new leadership team.

I am proud that after a multi-month evaluation of the CRMC’s personnel and programs, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration concluded in a report published last year that CRMC is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal zone management program. It also declared the agency to be a national leader in ocean planning, and “innovative” in its development and promulgation of the Shoreline Change (Beach) SAMP. This is a great recognition for Rhode Island.
With this in mind, I leave the Council knowing it is doing exactly what it needs to be doing, with strong programs and dedicated staff that will continue to build on the success we have achieved.

I would like to thank the CRMC staff for their hard work and professionalism during my time as Chair, and my fellow Council members for their patience, dedication, and commitment to the mission of the Coastal Resources Management Council.

Thank you, Governor, for your continued leadership and support that will keep such an important agency progressing in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Jennifer R. Cervenka

Cc: Jeffrey Willis, Executive Director
    James Boyd, Deputy Director
    Anthony DeSisto, Chief Legal Counsel
    Raymond Coia, Vice-Chairman
    Council members
    Lisa Turner, Secretary
    Grover Fugate, Former Executive Director