

THE CITY OF NEWPORT

**RESOLUTION
OF THE
COUNCIL**

No. 2025-84

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WHEREAS, the City of Newport is home to the North and South Easton Ponds, primary drinking water sources for customers served across Aquidneck Island and critical components of the City's water infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Easton Pond Dams, which impound the drinking water reservoir, have been classified as high-hazard dams requiring urgent stabilization and long-term resiliency measures to meet current and future safety standards under Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) regulations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Newport previously submitted a \$50 million application under FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program to support the Easton Pond Dam Resiliency Project, a project essential to the safety, security, and sustainability of Newport's water supply and broader regional resilience; and

WHEREAS, the City was not selected in the FY23 BRIC funding round and actively resubmitted the project in coordination with the Rhode Island Department of Emergency Management Agency for the FY24 cycle when, on April 4, 2025, FEMA announced the termination of the BRIC program, eliminating a critical pathway for funding nationally significant infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, the City of Newport is moving forward with interim stabilization efforts and received partial support through the OSCAR Fund to investigate the incorporation of sustainable public access into long-term resiliency measures, but substantial funding remains urgently needed to ensure the critical long-term safety and functionality of the Easton Pond Dams; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's coastal infrastructure and drinking water systems are increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including increased intensity of storms, flooding, sea level rise, and erosion and require urgent investment in resilient systems; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

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RESOLVED: that the City Council of the City of Newport respectfully urges the Honorable Governor of the State of Rhode Island to:

1. Advocate for immediate and alternative state and federal funding support for the North and South Easton Pond Dams Resiliency Project;
2. Petition the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation to seek emergency legislative remedies or special appropriations in light of FEMA's BRIC cancellation;
3. Convene a statewide task force to identify and secure sustainable funding for dam safety and climate-resilient infrastructure in Rhode Island's coastal communities; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: that the City Clerk shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the Office of the Governor, the Rhode Island General Assembly, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management.

IN COUNCIL
READ AND PASSED
MAY 14, 2025



Laura C. Swistak, CMC
City Clerk