



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEWIDE “FOLLOW THE WATER” FORUM TO ADDRESS R.I.’S WATER SUPPLY ISSUES OCTOBER 27

The Coalition for Water Security (CWS), a partnership of many of the state’s leading environmental and quality of life groups, will host a forum on Rhode Island’s water resources, entitled **“Follow the Water” on Tuesday, October 27th at the CCRI – Warwick Campus in Room 4080 from 4:00 – 7:00 PM.** The statewide public event takes place just prior to the re-convening of the state General Assembly on October 28, where water legislation supported by the CWS is awaiting final passage.

The program will feature Alisa Richardson, principal engineer with the R.I. Department of Environmental Management (DEM), who will discuss how much water Rhode Island has at its disposal, and where it is located. Richardson will describe DEM’s work to assess how much water flow is needed to protect the natural functioning of Rhode Island's rivers and streams, while remaining an asset for economic development, and to identify which of Rhode Island watersheds are already under stress from over-withdrawals and how that can be remedied.

Other featured speakers include:

- Mark Smith, Director of the Eastern Freshwater Program for The Nature Conservancy, who will provide an overview of regional water supplies and efforts to develop resource protection and allocation frameworks.
- Kenneth Burke, General Manager of the RI Water Resources Board, will discuss the water supply management goals and strategies of the Water Resources Board.
- Jon Reiner, the Director of Planning for the Town of North Kingstown will describe his town’s effort to manage its water future.
- Meg Kerr, the Watershed and Community Projects Coordinator for the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, will talk about the benefits of conservation and efficiency, and the steps we can take to provide the water our communities and businesses need while protecting Rhode Island’s natural resources.

The legislation currently pending at the General Assembly, the *Water Use and Efficiency Act*, gives state agencies and water suppliers essential tools to promote water conservation in ways that provide enough water for priority uses, the ecology and to maintain a competitive economic edge for the state. The Act is supported by the CWS, DEM, the Water Resources Board, R.I. Statewide Planning, the R.I. Department of Health, and the R.I. Waterworks Association

The program is free and open to the public, and of special interest to local planners, municipal officials, legislators, watershed and land protection groups, and water resource managers. To register or for more information contact Jane Austin at jaustin@savebay.org or 272-3540 x123 or go to <https://www.savebay.org/NetCommunity/SSLPage.aspx?pid=1212> to register on-line.

The Coalition for Water Security is a partnership of many of the state's leading public interest groups, including groups the 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, The Nature Conservancy, Rhode Island Land Trust Council, Rhode Island Natural History Survey, Sierra Club Rhode Island, Save The Bay, Trust for Public Land, and the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association.