

Victoria and Brian Worcester
6 Steeple Lane
Lincoln, Rhode Island 02865

May 15, 2024



Senator Jack Reed

1000 Chapel View Blvd., Suite 290
Cranston, RI, 02920

Senator Reed,

We wanted to bring a situation to your attention and ask for your assistance.

Over the past few years, an embankment along the Prudence Island shoreline has been eroding due to storms. The embankment is located along the shoreline between Edda Avenue and Holbrook Avenue on the east side of Prudence Island. Late last fall, the erosion was exacerbated by several storms combined with extremely hightides. Residents of the island voiced their concerns, and the Town of Portsmouth inspected the area and agreed the area needed to be rebuilt to save the shoreline and Narragansett Avenue.

As part of the permitting process, Portsmouth requested, and was granted, a permit to rebuild from Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). However, the permit came with additional stipulations. One of these stipulations is:

All unpermitted structures along the coastal beach and bluff must be removed in their entirety as part of this assent. This includes, but not limited to, access ramps and stairs.

Note: there are three sets of stairs (located near Holbrook Ave, Madison Ave, and Edda Ave) and a storage rack south of Holbrook Ave that need to be removed.

Our understanding is the structures will not be allowed to be rebuilt without going through a permitting process through CRMC. Meaning, even if the community is granted a permit to rebuild the stairs, it would not be until after this summer. The project is due to begin on May 20th and run through May 31.

We own houses at 018 Madison Avenue and 013 Holbrook Avenue, and I can only speak with certainty to the set of stairs in front of Madison Avenue, but I believe the other sets have similar stories behind them. The set of stairs and the end of Madison Ave serves several residences. Aside from the daily use for swimming and recreation, the stairs serve as an access point for 5 permitted moorings. With no stairs, the moorings are inaccessible. Similarly, the residents of this area include elderly, a disabled veteran, and our daughter who has Cerebral Palsy. Charlee, who you met in Washington D.C. a number of years ago as part of her participation in Speak Now for Kids, requires the use of a walker which, even with stairs, was difficult but without stairs would be impossible for her to get to the beach as it would be for everyone.

The community understands the importance of beach and shoreline preservation. The residents of this area, and all of Prudence, regularly work to keep the shoreline clean, strengthened, and intact. Along

with this, the value of our homes, and thus our taxes, are affected by beach access. It is not that it would be difficult to get to the beach without stairs – it would be impossible.

The CRMC stipulates that “all unpermitted” stairs must be removed. Though the 3 sets of stairs affected by this project have been repaired and updated, they all pre-date the inception of the CRMC by decades. The CRMC was established in 1971 – the stairs at the bottom of Madison pre-date 1954. We know this because the stairs were replaced after Hurricane Carol, which happened in 1954.

Not being able to rebuild the stairs immediately after this project would prove to be a hardship to many. Having to permit stairs that pre-date the CRMC does not make sense – both physically and fiscally.

Can we please have your support and help in allowing the residents to put back stairs that will allow us to continue to enjoy the beaches of Rhode Island?

We can be reached via phone, email, text, or mail.

We appreciate any/all consideration.

Sincerely,

Brian and Victoria Worcester

781.363.1522 or 860.324.0868 (phone or text)

Tori.worcester@gmail.com

6 Steeple Lane Lincoln, Rhode Island, 02865

CC Rich Rainer
Mike Jarbeau
Brian Woodhead
John Spadaro

