

April 14, 2025

Chariman Raymond C. Coia State of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council Oliver H. Stedman Government Center 4808 Tower Hill Road, Suite 3 Wakefield, RI 02879-1900 Via Electronic Mail to <u>cstaffl@crmc.ri.gov</u>



Re: CRMC File No. 2023-08-084 TSL, LLC; RIDEM Water Quality Certification Number 24-008 – Installation of a berthing facility and expansion of existing marina for the mooring of a pool boat for recreational purposes.

Dear Chairman Coia,

I write on behalf of the applicant TSL, LLC, to object to the request for continuance filed on April 11, 2025. Under Management Rule 1.5.7, continuances are only granted for good cause and there is no good cause for a continuance here.

This application was filed on August 23, 2023, and completed completeness review on August 25, 2023. The application was properly put out to public notice. CRMC issued a notice of opportunity to comment which was properly published on May 29, 2024. The Stoneharbor Condominium Association filed objections on August 14, 2024, October 28, 2024, December 13, 2024, and refiled the objections with this filing on April 11, 2025. Now they claim that the hearing, which is not formally noticed yet, comes too quick. Their request to continue this hearing is inconsistent with the CRMC rules of procedure and does not demonstrate any good cause for delay and should be denied.

The request does not cite or discuss the rules governing CRMC procedure, presumably because it does not jibe with those rules. The pertinent section of the Management Procedures is section 1.5.1, and specifically subsections F and G, as copied below.

- F. In the event that during this thirty (30) day period formal written objection and/or request for hearing is received by the Coastal Resources Management Council from an interested party and said formal written objection and/or request for hearing is substantiated by genuine and material reason as outlined in § 20-00-<u>1.1.6(G)</u> of this Title therefore, the matter shall then become a contested case under the Rules and Regulations of the Council, whereupon a public hearing may be scheduled at a time immediately following the thirty (30) day objection period.
- G. Upon the expiration of the thirty (30) day period, the Council shall consider the application including staff reports and recommendations thereon, reports and recommendations from other State and local agencies thereon, and comments thereon. When an application requires, as a condition of Assent, that a deed restriction is necessary, the proposed language for said restriction shall be, unless the Executive Director determines the application would be better processed without it, made part of the staff reports to the Council.

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The CRMC acknowledged the completeness of the application upon its initial review in August 2023. Stoneharbor's claim that the application may still be incomplete is unfounded.

Stoneharbor received its notice of its opportunity to comment and filed its comments repeatedly, beginning back in August 2024. Stoneharbor's counsel now claims that it has had insufficient time to prepare its case. But, the Management Rules clearly put them on notice that the hearing can come at any time after the 30-day comment period during which they presented their objection. Stoneharbor claims that it was not aware of the hearing schedule in sufficient time before the hearing. But, they seek this continuance even before receiving any formal notice of the hearing. Stoneharbor has long been on notice and has long known that a hearing was coming. Its filing raises no good cause for extension of an as of yet still unnoticed hearing date.

Stoneharbor cites Rule 1.5.9 as requiring the parties to identify witnesses and experts in preparation of hearing, evidently claiming it has insufficient time to do so. Those notifications are not required until after the staff report has been presented and they must be filed no less than seven days before the scheduled hearing. No staff report has issued as of yet and the hearing has not been scheduled. Stoneharbor clearly has not been denied its opportunity to identify its witnesses. The applicant has demonstrated the capacity to comply with rule 1.5.9 on two previous occasions, filing supplemental information with CRMC and copying Stoneharbor's counsel on November 20, 2024, and April 9, 2025. Stoneharbor has long had the capacity to update its filings throughout the period in which we have awaited the hearing, as demonstrated by the fact that it has filed repeated updates during that period itself.

Stoneharbor complains that this proceeding should be assigned to a subcommittee before being presented to the full council for hearing. It does not cite any authority related to any such required procedure for contested applications. As quoted above, section 1.5.1F indicates that "the matter shall then become a contested case under the Rules and Regulations of the Council, whereupon a public hearing may be scheduled at a time immediately following the thirty (30) day objection period." There is no authority requiring subcommittee hearings for contested cases. Regardless, the matter has not even been scheduled for any hearing yet, so this specific objection is obviously premature.

For all of these reasons, Stoneharbor does not demonstrate good cause for a continuance. Therefore, TSL, LLC respectfully requests denial of the proposed continuance.

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cc. Mark Ryan, Esq. Tenessa Azar, Esq.