

# Valarie Lawson

## RI State Senate, District 14



### QUESTION 1

Rhode Island's shoreline will face a variety of challenges in the coming decades: rising sea levels, loss of coastal habitats, and the development of offshore wind. It is important that the decisions of our coastal regulators be made by experienced professionals with expertise on coastal matters and guided by sound science. For several years, Save The Bay and others have advocated for eliminating the politically-appointed Coastal Resources Management Council and renaming it the Department of Coastal Resources, with decision-making authority resting with a Director, similar to other state agencies. Will you support legislation to reform CRMC by eliminating the politically-appointed council?

**YES**

### QUESTION 2

Despite decades of public education and volunteer cleanups, litter and marine debris continue to be problems along our shore and throughout the watershed, with beverage containers being one of the biggest contributors to the problem. A recent study by researchers at URI found there is now roughly 1,000 tons of microplastic on the bottom of Narragansett Bay. Beverage container deposit laws (also known as "bottle bills") have been proven to be one of the most effective policies to both reduce litter and improve recycling. Would you support legislation to create a recycling refund system for beverage containers in Rhode Island?

**YES**

**Please share any additional ideas or priorities you would have as a state legislator to improve and protect Narragansett Bay and its watershed:**

I believe it's important to follow the science to identify major sources of microplastic pollution, regulate it, and ensure that the Narragansett Bay Commission and other wastewater treatment facilities around the Bay have an adequate workforce to sustain their important work. Also worth noting is that CRMC needs to be fully staffed and functioning so that they can play their role in regulating coastal activities appropriately.