

TO: Richard Ribb
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FROM: Peter August
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The RIEMC met today to review the business accomplished in the 2005 legislative session and the FY 2006 state budget. As you know, the needs and requests of the Coordination Team were not addressed in the budget or the work of the legislature this summer. The RIEMC had a spirited discussion on why this occurred and instructed me to communicate the following thoughts to you and the Coordination Team.

- 1) Please consider working with DEM and other state agencies to use the state's supplemental budget process to seek emergency funding for monitoring programs that have been suspended or dropped due to the loss of the \$1,000,000 allocation that was going to support DEM environmental monitoring. Some monitoring activities, especially USGS monitoring of major rivers feeding Narragansett Bay, provide crucial baseline information for numerous resource management programs.
- 2) Now is a key time for the Coordination Team to take a leadership role in ensuring that critical bay and watershed program needs are met within individual agency FY07 budget requests to the Governor. This is especially important for monitoring programs that are distributed among DEM, the Bay Commission, Water Resource Board, and other state agencies. If we are to have a coordinated systems-level plan for the Bay and watershed, we need to take an active role in coordinating budget requests as well. If any one agency fails to receive the funding it requires to perform essential Bay/watershed management activities, the whole coordinated system fails.
- 3) It is clear to the RIEMC that we failed this last legislative session to communicate to the Governor and General Assembly the importance of strong environmental monitoring for the bay and watershed. We are certain they are committed to a healthy environment, but our leaders in the State House obviously do not realize the role monitoring plays in the resource management process. Indeed, the fact that you were not confirmed by the Senate suggests we have not been effective in educating our leadership of the overall importance of the Coordination Team and its collaboratives and advisory committees. The RIEMC requests that the Coordination Team charge its Public Advisory Committee (PAC) with:
 - a. developing an effective communications strategy we can all follow so the state's political leadership is well informed on bay and watershed management programs and needs, and
 - b. instructing the Coordination Team, RIEMC, Economic Monitoring Collaborative, SAC, and Ad-Hoc Committees on what we must collectively do to be more effective in communicating environmental monitoring issues and needs to the Governors Office, the House, and the Senate.