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A Summary of Environmental Laws Passed in 2013 in Rhode Island

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STATEWIDE WETLANDS AND SEPTIC STANDARDS PLANNING

[Chapters 136 & 162 of the Public Laws of 2013](#) authorized establishment of a task force convened by the Division of Planning to develop recommendations to establish statewide standards for wetlands and septic systems. The task force will consist of state and local officials and representatives from the business community, as well as one civil or environmental engineer. The director of the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) must submit proposed legislation establishing statewide standards to the governor and legislative leaders by January 31, 2015. *Effective Date: June 25, 2013*

EXPEDITED DEM CITATION PROCESS

[Chapters 290 & 400 of the Public Laws of 2013](#) authorized establishment of an expedited process to resolve certain minor DEM citations. For the expedited resolution to take effect, the person alleged of the noncompliance must voluntarily agree to the resolution. *Effective Date: July 15, 2013*

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP OF FORMER INDUSTRIAL AND MANUFACTURING SITES FOR SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

[Chapter 296 of the Public Laws of 2013](#) made revisions to the Industrial Property Remediation

and Reuse Act that pertain to the development of schools on former industrial and manufacturing sites. The law requires that the DEM adopt the same numerical objective standard for the environmental cleanup of schools as the standard applied to residential use. In addition, the law outlines remediation standards at properties with petroleum or vapor intrusion in the subsurface or the groundwater.

Also, the law defines "chemicals of potential concern for vapor intrusion; source area; vadose zone and conceptual site model." *Effective Date: July 15, 2013*

MATTRESS RECYCLING STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

[Chapters 281 & 423 of the Public Laws of 2013](#) established a program to make the manufacturers of mattresses responsible for disposing the products. The laws create a mattress stewardship council tasked with developing a statewide mattress stewardship program. Mattress producers must join the council. The council has to submit a plan on or before July 15, 2015, for the director of the Resource Recovery Corporation to approve that establishes a statewide mattress recycling program. A primary responsibility of the council is to minimize public sector involvement in the management of discarded mattresses. *Effective Date: July 15, 2013*

BIODIESEL HEATING OIL ACT OF 2013

[Chapters 150 & 221 of the Public Laws of 2013](#) encourage the production of biofuels in Rhode Island to help create jobs in this emerging industry, as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to promote the use of more efficient heating equipment. The laws establish percentage thresholds of bio-based product in No. 2 heating oil beginning on July 1, 2014, when all heating oil sold in the state must contain at least two percent of a bio-based product. By July 1, 2017, the percentage increases to five percent. *Effective Date: July 11, 2013*

TOLLING OF CERTAIN APPROVAL AND PERMIT TIME PERIODS

[Chapters 137 & 184 of the Public Laws of 2013](#) extended the expiration dates of certain approvals and permits. The laws pertain to such approvals and permits of the DEM, the subdivision of land, local zoning ordinances, and the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). They extend the tolling period from June 30, 2013, to June 30, 2015, and apply to approvals and permits in effect on November 9, 2009, and those issued between November 9, 2009, and June 30, 2015. *Effective Date: June 25, 2013*

COMMISSION TO PLAN FOR MANAGING THE FUTURE OF SOLID WASTE IN RHODE ISLAND

[Resolution 419 of the Acts and Resolves of 2013](#) established an 11-member commission to study and plan for the future of solid waste management in the state. The commission includes state and local officials, as well as the president of the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, or designee, and the president of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, or designee. It is tasked to study the state's role in solid waste management, the mix of private and public financing, the operation and ownership of solid waste facilities, and the steps necessary to maximize the source reduction, reuse, and recycling of solid waste. The commission is directed to issue a report with its findings no later than December 31, 2014.

STORMWATER REGULATION STUDY COMMISSION

[Resolution 417 of the Acts and Resolves of 2013](#) established a five-member commission composed of public officials, as well as the president of the Rhode Island Builders Association, or designee, and a public member. The commission's purpose is to study the state's

stormwater regulations and requirements and their effect on the waters as well as on development and redevelopment. The commission must submit a report outlining any statutory and policy needs regarding stormwater regulation to the General Assembly no later than April 15, 2014.

For more information, please contact:

[Richard M. Fil](#)

Partner
Robinson & Cole LLP
One Financial Plaza
Suite 1430
Providence, RI 02903
401-709-3329
rfil@rc.com

[Joseph B. White](#)

Partner/Lobbyist
Robinson & Cole LLP
One Financial Plaza
Suite 1430
Providence, RI 02903
401-709-3358
jbwhite@rc.com

[Jason C. Martiesian](#)

Lobbyist
Robinson & Cole LLP
One Financial Plaza
Suite 1430
Providence, RI 02903
401-709-3360
jmartiesian@rc.com

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