FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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EMERGENCY SHELLFISHING CLOSURE LIFTED FOR NARRAGANSETT BAY, LOCAL WATERS

*Impacted waters reopen effective noon today;
conditional areas closed through Monday, October 17*

PROVIDENCE – Effective at noon today, all waters impacted by the precautionary shellfish harvesting closure in Rhode Island are open to shellfishing with exception of conditional areas which remain closed due to rainfall and are scheduled to reopen at noon on Monday, October 17. The emergency closure was due to a confirmed harmful algae bloom caused by the presence of toxic phytoplankton, Pseudo-nitzschia spp.

Impacted waters include Narragansett Bay, Mt. Hope Bay, Kickemuit River, Sakonnet River and their tributaries. During the emergency closure, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) analyzed water and shellfish samples for the presence of the toxin, domoic acid. Two water samples tested positive for this toxin; shellfish samples from the area tested negative – along with all other shellfish samples collected throughout the Bay during this closure. Based on these negative results and the bloom's decline, the closure is being lifted earlier than expected. DEM and RIDOH will continue to monitor impacted waters – collecting and analyzing samples twice per week.

For updates on shellfish closure areas, contact the DEM 24-hour shellfishing hotline at 401-222-2900. To join the DEM Marine Fisheries email list, subscribe at rimarinefisheries-subscribe@listserve.ri.gov. For more information on DEM divisions and programs, visit www.dem.ri.gov. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/RhodeIslandDEM or on Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM) for timely updates.

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