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## **Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank and The Nature Conservancy Launch New Municipal Resilience Program**

*The program will assist three cities and towns in developing a specific action plan for addressing climate change*

**PROVIDENCE, R.I** – Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank announced the launch of the Resilient Rhody Municipal Resilience Program (MRP) in partnership with The Nature Conservancy today. The program aims to support Rhode Island municipalities in increasing their climate resilience by providing technical assistance and the ability to apply for implementation funds.

“Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges we face,” said Gov. Gina Raimondo. “It threatens both our natural resources and our public health. I’m committed to continuing to grow our state’s climate resilience effort, and I thank the Infrastructure Bank and The Nature Conservancy for their work on The Municipal Resilience Program.”

The program is seeking applications from municipalities wishing to assess their vulnerability to climate change and prepare for its impacts. The Nature Conservancy will support municipalities in completing a climate vulnerability assessment and develop a prioritized list of actionable plans and projects via the Community Resilience Building process. Participating communities will receive designation as a Resilient Rhody Municipality upon successful completion of the program.

“Municipalities are on the front lines of climate change. Rising sea levels and increased storms will have long-term effects on local infrastructure and residents,” said Shaun O’Rourke, director of stormwater and resiliency at the Infrastructure Bank and the state’s chief resiliency officer. “The Municipal Resilience Program will equip Rhode Island’s cities and towns with the data, tools and process needed to effectively address climate change.”

The program aims to deepen municipalities’ understanding of climate risk and assist them in developing resilient solutions. Municipalities will build on local hazard mitigation planning to develop initial resilience plans and prioritize projects. After successfully completing the MRP, municipalities will be eligible to apply for implementation funds.

“The Infrastructure Bank’s expanded mandate allows us to provide competitive financing to a wide variety of infrastructure projects throughout Rhode Island,” said Executive Director and CEO of the Infrastructure Bank Jeffrey Diehl. “The Bank looks forward to working more closely with cities and towns to finance more climate resilience infrastructure projects and develop specific resilience plans for communities through the Municipal Resilience Project.”

“These collaborative Community Resilience Building workshops will help Rhode Island municipalities figure out how to meet their most pressing challenges from extreme weather and climate change,” said John Torgan, The Nature Conservancy’s Rhode Island director. “In one place, resilient solutions might include better urban tree cover and stormwater management; in another, they might include supporting local agriculture, access to public transportation or wetland restoration. This in-depth focus helps communities identify strengths and solutions that will work for them and make Rhode Island more resilient as a whole.”

The program supports the goals outlined in the state’s Climate Resilience Action Strategy (*Resilient Rhody*) released by Governor Gina Raimondo in 2018. *Resilient Rhody* identified steps the state can take to protect against unexpected events, like severe weather, while addressing chronic environmental stresses, such as sea level rise and aging infrastructure. The MRP will allow cities and towns to specifically evaluate their vulnerability to changing weather and severe weather events, while providing them with the funds necessary to take on specific resilience projects.

All Rhode Island cities and towns are eligible to apply for the Municipal Resilience Program, but only three municipalities will be selected for this first round of the program. More information and the Request for Responses can be found at <https://www.riib.org/rfp>