

What is Question 6?

The \$35 million Green Economy Bond supports a healthier Rhode Island, providing resources to improve our parks, bikeways, and other recreational areas; to preserve green spaces; and to clean up waterways and contaminated land for redevelopment.

Open space, parks & bikeways: \$18 million

The Green Economy Bond includes \$8 million to support capital improvements to state parks and the preservation of vital green spaces throughout Rhode Island. It provides the necessary state match to secure critical federal, local, and private investment. The bond also includes \$10 million to expand the state's bikeway network. Together, these investments connect people with nature and opportunity, enhancing quality of life, public health, and tourism.

Local recreation and green spaces: \$9 million

Helping cities and towns improve recreational facilities and increase green spaces is key to building a vibrant economy and nurturing a healthy environment. The Green Economy Bond provides \$5 million in matching grants to communities to develop and improve public recreational areas; it also includes \$4 million in matching grants to assist with protecting open space for the public's enjoyment and conserving our natural resources.

Brownfields & stormwater: \$8 million

Cleaning up former industrial sites, or "brownfields," supports a healthier environment and accelerates economic growth by opening up valuable real estate to redevelopment. Rhode Island is home to an estimated 12,000 brownfields sites. The Green Economy Bond includes \$5 million in matching grants to help return these properties to tax rolls, create jobs, and revitalize neighborhoods. The Green Economy Bond also includes \$3 million to clean up the state's waterways and to reduce stormwater pollution that causes flooding and impairs local waters, leading to beach and shellfishing closures, which have undesirable economic impacts

Why should I vote for Question 6?

Passage of Question 6 invests in the health of our lands, waters, and communities. Our environment – from iconic landscapes and coastline to local foods and vibrant neighborhoods – is at the heart of why people choose the Ocean State to live, visit, work and raise a family. Environmental bonds enjoy a long history of support among Rhode Islanders because they invest in preserving what people love about our state.

Why is this a smart investment for the state right now?

Question 6 includes \$27 million to support capital improvements to parks and recreational facilities and to help preserve vital green spaces. Across the state, there is an incredible need for this grant funding – but limited supply. This summer, the state received nearly 100 grant applications from cities and towns looking to improve their recreational facilities. Over \$16 million was requested; only \$4 million is available.

Without this state funding, communities will be seriously challenged to invest in these facilities that are a vital part of the state's outdoor recreation industry, that contributes \$2.4 billion annually to the economy and supports 24,000 jobs.

Question 6 opens the door to other public and private investments to redevelop former industrial ("brownfield") sites, providing needed jobs and strengthening local communities. Working collaboratively with partners, the state has cleaned up over 770 brownfield sites across Rhode Island, spanning 5,500 acres – transforming them into new schools, parks, homes, and businesses. As part of a 2014 bond authorization, the state recently invested \$3.7 million in brownfields clean-up, leveraging over \$418 million in additional investment, supporting over 2,700 jobs, and addressing 14 valuable properties across Rhode Island.

The Green Economy Bond also includes \$10 million to begin filling in the gaps along popular bikeway routes, including the Blackstone River Bikeway and the South County Bike Path. Nationally and in Rhode Island, a modern transit system that supports all users is becoming increasingly important economically and key to attracting Millennials who embrace a carless culture and are poised to dominate the workforce. Nationally, bike facilities contribute \$133 billion to the economy and support over one million jobs.

What impact will this investment have for Rhode Island?

Combined with other funding sources, this money will support capital improvements to state parks and allow the state to preserve important green spaces. It also opens the door to private investment to redevelop abandoned industrial sites, attracting talent and new businesses to Rhode Island and revitalizing our communities. And it provides vital matching dollars to cities and towns to upgrade stormwater systems, improve recreational areas, and protect open space for the enjoyment of one and all..

Rhode Island's greenspaces are part of our identity as a state. They promote tourism, support our family traditions, and fuel our economy. From family reunions and concerts in the park to pumpkin picking at a local farm to fishing along the river's edge, it's hard not to appreciate the value and beauty of these special places to our state – now and into the future. The state's long commitment to preserving them for public benefit and conservation is evident, but it is not over. There remain once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for the state to work with its partners to acquire land that enhances parks and wildlife management areas, preserves iconic properties, protects drinking water supplies, and supports the viability of local agriculture. These investments are also a critical part of the effort to respond to climate change. From minimizing the impacts of flooding to protecting the diversity and abundance of wildlife, open space helps ensure Rhode Island will be more resilient to climate risks. For the first time in 30 years, there are no funds available to help communities acquire these precious lands.