



Town of Coventry

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On July 29, 2022, Town officials met with Governor McKee, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Director David Chopy and representatives of the Johnson's Pond Civic Association to discuss the environmental crisis associated with the rapid depletion of the water levels of Johnson's Pond. Governor McKee assured that all legal options are being evaluated and legal remedies are being actively pursued. The Town of Coventry will be working with the State to facilitate a coordinated effort with the goal of closing the dam's flow gates and prevent the pond from being drained any further.

On July 13, 2022, RIDEM issued a notice of violation to Soscia LLC to cease and desist from releasing water through the Johnson's Pond dam due to low water levels since June 30, 2022. In fact, DEM ordered Soscia to reduce the streamflow from the pond to 24 cubic feet per second (CFS) and to maintain the water levels in the pond at "historic levels", something that DEM said Soscia was not doing. Soscia responded by filing a Federal District Court complaint against DEM. Soscia requested a temporary restraining order issue against DEM's threatened enforcement action, but this request was denied by the Federal Court. DEM can proceed as it deems necessary to address the water levels in the pond and seek enforcement of its regulations.

The Town has received inquiries from some residents regarding the adverse effects that the low water levels on the pond may have on their property values. Notwithstanding the immediate impacts that the low water level is having on recreation, the environment and on potential home sales, the tax assessments are performed on a data driven basis as reported by home sales and the revaluation process. With home sales reaching all-time highs in the past two years, it is unlikely that the data would support lowering assessed values at this time since recent sales are a significant part of property valuations. It is in everyone's best interest to see the water level of the pond restored as soon as possible, in order to mitigate these unfortunate circumstances.

The Town of Coventry is a home-rule charter community representing 35,688 residents in Kent County, Rhode Island. Press inquiries may be directed to the Town Manager Ben Marchant, 401-822-9185, bmarchant@coventryri.org.

1670 Flat River Road
Tel. (401) 822-9185 Fax (401) 822-9139