

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE & INSPECTION**

IN RE: Michael J Capp

FILE NO.: OCI-OWTS-24-81

NOTICE OF VIOLATION

A. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Sections 42-17.1-2(21) and 42-17.6-3 of the Rhode Island General Laws, as amended, ("R.I. Gen. Laws") you are hereby notified that the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management ("Director" of "RIDEM") has reasonable grounds to believe that the above-named party ("Respondent") has violated certain statutes and/or administrative regulations under RIDEM's jurisdiction.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

On August 13, 2025, RIDEM issued a Warning Letter ("Warning") to Respondent by certified mail for the violations that are the subject of this Notice of Violation ("NOV"). The Warning advised that specific actions needed to be taken following the purchase of property that is serviced by a cesspool. On August 16, 2025, the Warning was delivered. As of the date of the NOV, Respondent has failed to comply with the Warning.

C. FACTS

- (1) The property is located at 2 South Street, Assessor's Plat 38, Lot 229, in Johnston, Rhode Island ("Property").
- (2) The Property includes a dwelling ("Dwelling") that was constructed in 1944.
- (3) RIDEM reviewed its records for the Property. The review revealed that no permit was issued by RIDEM for an onsite wastewater treatment system ("OWTS") for the Dwelling.
- (4) RIDEM contacted the Town of Johnston, Rhode Island to determine if the Dwelling is connected to public sewers. RIDEM was informed that public sewers are not available.
- (5) Prior to 1968, cesspools were a common means of wastewater disposal. Regulations enacted in Rhode Island in 1968 prohibited installation of cesspools.
- (6) Upon information and belief, RIDEM has determined that a cesspool services the Dwelling.
- (7) On June 23, 2025, the Property was transferred to Respondent ("Transfer").
- (8) Upon information and belief, the Transfer was not:
 - (a) Between current spouses.

- (b) Between parents and their children.
 - (c) Between full siblings.
 - (d) Where the grantor transfers the real property to be held in a revocable or irrevocable trust, where at least one of the designated beneficiaries is of the first degree of relationship to the grantor.
- (9) As of the date of the NOV, Respondent has failed to install a new OWTS and properly abandoned the cesspool.

D. VIOLATION

Based on the foregoing facts, the Director has reasonable grounds to believe that Respondent has violated the following statutes and/or regulations:

- (1) **R.I. Gen. Laws §23-19.15-12(a)** – requiring that any cesspool found to be serving a building or use subject to sale or transfer be removed and replaced with an OWTS within 12 months of the date of sale or transfer.
- (2) **Rhode Island’s *Rules Establishing Minimum Standards Relating to Location, Design, Construction and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (250-RICR-150-10-6)* (“OWTS Rules”), Part 6.57(C)** – prohibiting the use of cesspools found to be serving a building or use subject to sale or transfer and requiring that the cesspool be removed and replaced with an OWTS within 12 months of the date of sale or transfer.

E. ORDER

Based upon the violations alleged above and pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Section 42-17.1-2(21), Respondent is hereby ORDERED to:

- (1) **IMMEDIATELY** cease use of the cesspool. No further use of the cesspool is allowed.
- (2) **Within 60 days of receipt of the NOV**, retain a licensed OWTS designer and have the licensed OWTS designer submit a formal application and plan to RIDEM to remove and replace the cesspool in accordance with the OWTS Rules (“Application”). The list of licensed OWTS designers can be obtained by contacting RIDEM’s Office of Water Resources – OWTS Program at (401) 222-3961 or from RIDEM’s web page at:
www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/licenses/isds/pdfs/deslist.pdf.
- (3) The Application shall be subject to RIDEM’s review and approval. Upon review, RIDEM shall provide written notification either granting formal approval or stating the deficiencies therein. **Within 7 days (unless a longer time is specified) of receiving a notification of deficiencies in the Application**, submit to RIDEM a modified proposal or additional information necessary to correct the deficiencies.

- (4) **Within 14 days of RIDEM's approval of the Application**, complete all work in accordance with the approval as evidenced by the issuance of a Certificate of Conformance by RIDEM.

F. PENALTY

- (1) Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Section 42-17.6-2, the following administrative penalty, as more specifically described in the attached penalty summary and worksheets, is hereby ASSESSED, jointly and severally, against each named respondent:

\$400

- (2) The proposed administrative penalty is calculated pursuant to Rhode Island's *Rules and Regulations for Assessment of Administrative Penalties* (250-RICR-130-00-1) ("Penalty Rules") and must be paid to RIDEM within 30 days of your receipt of the NOV.

- (3) Penalty payments shall be by one of two methods:

- (a) By certified check, cashier's check, or money order made payable to the **General Treasury – Water and Air Protection Program** and forwarded to:

Administrator, RIDEM Office of Compliance and Inspection
235 Promenade Street, Suite 220
Providence, RI 02908-5767

- (b) By wire transfer in accordance with instructions provided by RIDEM.

- (4) Penalties assessed against Respondent in the NOV are penalties payable to and for the benefit of the State of Rhode Island and are not compensation for actual pecuniary loss.
- (5) If any violation alleged herein shall continue, then each day during which the violation occurs or continues shall constitute a separate offense and the penalties and/or costs for that violation shall continue to accrue in the manner set forth in the attached penalty summary and worksheets. The accrual of additional penalties and costs shall be suspended if RIDEM determines that reasonable efforts have been made to comply promptly with the NOV.

(G) RIGHT TO ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING

- (1) Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapters 42-17.1, 42-17.6, 42-17.7 and 42-35, each named respondent is entitled to request a hearing before RIDEM's Administrative Adjudication Division regarding the allegations, orders and/or penalties set forth in Sections B through F above. All requests for hearing **MUST**:

- (a) Be in writing. See R.I. Gen. Laws Sections 42-17.1-2(21)(i) and 42-17.6-4(b).

- (b) Be **RECEIVED** by RIDEM's Administrative Adjudication Division, at the following address, within 20 days of your receipt of the NOV. See R.I. Gen. Laws Sections 42-17.1-2(21)(i) and 42-17.7-9:

Administrative Clerk
RIDEM - Administrative Adjudication Division
235 Promenade Street, Room 350
Providence, RI 02908-5767.

- (c) Indicate whether you deny the alleged violations and/or whether you believe that the administrative penalty is excessive. See R.I. Gen. Laws Section 42-17.6-4(b).
- (d) State clearly and concisely the specific issues which are in dispute, the facts in support thereof and the relief sought or involved, if any. See Part 1.7(B) of Rhode Island's *Rules and Regulations for the Administrative Adjudication Division* (250-RICR-10-00-1).
- (2) A copy of each request for hearing must also be forwarded to:

Tricia Quest, Esq.
RIDEM - Office of Legal Services
235 Promenade Street, 4TH Floor
Providence, RI 02908-5767

- (3) Each named respondent has the right to be represented by legal counsel at all administrative proceedings relating to this matter.
- (4) Each respondent must file a separate and timely request for an administrative hearing before RIDEM's Administrative Adjudication Division as to each violation alleged in the written NOV. If any respondent fails to request a hearing in the above-described time or manner regarding any violation set forth herein, then the NOV shall automatically become a Final Compliance Order enforceable in Superior Court as to that respondent and/or violation and any associated administrative penalty proposed in the NOV shall be final as to that respondent. See R.I. Gen. Laws Sections 42-17.1-2(21)(i) and (vi) and 42-17.6-4(b) and (c).
- (5) Failure to comply with the NOV may subject each respondent to additional civil and/or criminal penalties.
- (6) An original signed copy of the NOV is being forwarded to the Town of Johnston, Rhode Island wherein the Property is located to be recorded in the land evidence records pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws Chapter 34-13 and Section 42-17.1-2(13), as amended.
- (7) The NOV does not preclude RIDEM from taking any additional enforcement action nor does it preclude any other local, state, or federal governmental entities from initiating enforcement actions based on the acts or omissions described herein.

If you have any legal questions, you may contact (or if you are represented by an attorney, please have your attorney contact) Tricia Quest of RIDEM's Office of Legal Services at (401) 537-4413 or tricia.quest@dem.ri.gov. All other inquiries should be directed to Stephen Tyrrell of RIDEM's Office of Compliance and Inspection at (401) 537-4479 or stephen.tyrrell@dem.ri.gov.

Please be advised that any such inquiries do not postpone, eliminate, or otherwise extend the need for a timely submittal of a written request for a hearing, as described in Section G above.

FOR THE DIRECTOR

By: _____
Christina Hoefsmit, Administrator
RIDEM Office of Compliance and Inspection

Dated: _____

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that on the _____ day of _____
the within Notice of Violation was forwarded to:

Michael J. Capp
47 Rollingwood Drive
Johnston, RI 02919

by Certified Mail.



ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY SUMMARY

Program: OWTS
File No.: OCI-OWTS-24-81
Respondent: Michael J Capp

GRAVITY OF VIOLATION					
SEE ATTACHED "PENALTY MATRIX WORKSHEETS."					
VIOLATION No. & CITATION	APPLICATION OF MATRIX		PENALTY CALCULATION		AMOUNT
	Type	Deviation	Penalty from Matrix	Number or Duration of Violations	
D (1) and D (2) – Failure to remove and replace cesspool with OWTS	Type I (\$1,000 Max. Penalty) *	Minor	\$400	1 years	\$400
SUB-TOTAL					\$400

*Maximum Penalties represent the maximum penalty amounts per day, per violation.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT FROM NONCOMPLIANCE

COSTS OF COMPLIANCE, EQUIPMENT, O&M, STUDIES OR OTHER DELAYED OR AVOIDED COSTS, INCLUDING INTEREST AND/OR ANY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE DERIVED OVER ENTITIES THAT COMPLY. NOTE: ECONOMIC BENEFIT MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE PENALTY UNLESS:

- THERE IS NO IDENTIFIABLE BENEFIT FROM NONCOMPLIANCE, OR
- THE AMOUNT OF ECONOMIC BENEFIT CAN NOT BE QUANTIFIED.

A review of the record in this matter has revealed that Respondent has either enjoyed no identifiable benefit from the noncompliance alleged in this enforcement action or that the amount of economic benefit that may have resulted cannot be quantified.

COST RECOVERY

ADDITIONAL OR EXTRAORDINARY COSTS INCURRED BY THE DIRECTOR DURING THE INVESTIGATION, ENFORCEMENT AND RESOLUTION OF AN ENFORCEMENT ACTION (EXCLUDING NON-OVERTIME PERSONNEL COSTS), FOR WHICH THE STATE IS NOT OTHERWISE REIMBURSED.

A review of the record in this matter has revealed that RIDEM has not incurred any additional or extraordinary costs during the investigation, enforcement, and resolution of this enforcement action (excluding non-overtime personnel costs), for which the State is not otherwise reimbursed.

TOTAL PENALTY PROPOSED UNDER PENALTY RULES = \$400

PENALTY MATRIX WORKSHEET

CITATION: Failure to remove and replace cesspool with OWTS

VIOLATION NOs.: D (1) and D (2)

TYPE		
<u> X </u> TYPE I <u>DIRECTLY</u> related to protecting health, safety, welfare, or environment.	<u> </u> TYPE II <u>INDIRECTLY</u> related to protecting health, safety, welfare, or environment.	<u> </u> TYPE III <u>INCIDENTAL</u> to protecting health, safety, welfare, or environment.
DEVIATION FROM THE STANDARD		
THE DEGREE TO WHICH A VIOLATION IS OUT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENT VIOLATED.		
FACTORS CONSIDERED: Taken from Part 1.10(A)(1)(b) of the Penalty Rules. (1) The extent to which the act or failure to act was out of compliance: The <i>Rhode Island Cesspool Act of 2007</i> requires that any cesspool found to be serving a building or use subject to sale or transfer be removed and replaced with an OWTS. Respondent failed to remove and replace the cesspool with an OWTS. (2) Environmental conditions: The cesspool serves the Dwelling. (3) Amount of the pollutant: Considered but not utilized for this calculation. (4) Toxicity or nature of the pollutant: Considered but not utilized for this calculation. (5) Duration of the violation: 1 year – the cesspool was required to be removed and replaced with an OWTS by June 23, 2026. (6) Areal extent of the violation: Considered but not utilized for this calculation. (7) Whether the person took reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent and/or mitigate the noncompliance: Respondent failed to take reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent and/or mitigate the noncompliance despite being advised by RIDEM by telephone on May 20, 2025 and by notice issued on August 13, 2025 that the cesspool needed to be removed and replaced with an OWTS. (8) Whether the person has previously failed to comply with any regulations, order, statute, license, permit, or approval issued or adopted by RIDEM, or any law which RIDEM has the authority or responsibility to enforce: Considered but not utilized for this calculation. (9) The degree of willfulness or negligence, including but not limited to, how much control the violator had over the occurrence of the violation and whether the violation was foreseeable: Respondent had full control over the violation. The violation was foreseeable. (10) Any other factor(s) that may be relevant in determining the amount of a penalty: The notice issued on August 13, 2025 stated the penalty could be up to \$1,000 per day.		
MAJOR	MODERATE	<u> X </u> MINOR

Penalty Matrix where the applicable statute provides for a civil penalty up to \$1,000		TYPE I	TYPE II	TYPE III
DEVIATION FROM STANDARD	MAJOR	\$800 to \$1,000	\$600 to \$800	\$400 to \$600
	MODERATE	\$600 to \$800	\$400 to \$600	\$200 to \$400
	MINOR	\$400 to \$600 \$400	\$200 to \$400	\$100 to \$200