

RESOLUTION OF THE
TOWN OF NEW SHOREHAM
PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS- DEER RESOLUTION

March 2, 2026

R-03-2026

RESOLVED, That:

Whereas, the Town of New Shoreham faces a public health crisis as a result of surging numbers of tick-borne infections, including Lyme Disease, Babesiosis, Erlichiosis, Anaplasmosis and, of great concern, Alpha Gal Syndrome; and

Whereas, the rates of tick-borne infection continue an ominous upward trend, with genuine daily health risks to residents and visitors alike; and,

Whereas, the range and gravity of tick-borne infections has become an intolerable public health hazard, interfering dramatically with the well-being of our community and our ability to enjoy the extraordinary natural world that surrounds us every day; and

Whereas, the Block Island community is united in its desire to finally tackle what has become an intolerable public health risk; and

Whereas, a primary vector for tick-borne infection is the white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), and that species is the essential host for the Lone Star Tick, which transmits Alpha Gal Syndrome; and

Whereas, the State Department of Environmental Management (DEM) manages the state's deer herd; and

Whereas, DEM appropriately and effectively prioritizes deer herd health, opportunities for recreational hunting and other humane herd maintenance and management activities; and

Whereas, Block Island's deer herd is unique in the state, in that the population is introduced, is isolated from mainland herds, and is causing major disruption in the daily lives and health of island residents; and

Whereas, Block Island's tick-borne infection crisis has led us to the conclusion that we no longer can tolerate the notion of "deer herd management" as an approach to our deer population; and,

Whereas, absent a significant change in approach to the island's deer herd, the island's residents face a genuine risk of widespread and potentially lifelong health challenges associated with tick-borne disease, particularly Alpha Gal Syndrome.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Town of New Shoreham respectfully requests that the Legislature of the State of Rhode Island provide the island with the tools essential to eliminating this daily health risk by:


1. Giving the island control over its own herd and the authority to implement aggressive techniques for the elimination of the island's white-tailed deer;
2. Providing explicit permission to bait deer, engage in driven hunts, and utilize all available tools that will permit the island to safely eliminate white-tailed deer as a vector for tick borne infection;
3. Requiring that Alpha Gal Syndrome become a reportable infection in order to advance public health research and enable state health care policymakers to track infections;
4. Allocate resources to tracking best practices for the management of tick disease vectors, including rodents.

Be it Further Resolved that the Town Council of the Town of New Shoreham hereby

respectfully requests that legislation be prepared to accomplish these and other objectives related to this public health crisis.

This Resolution shall take effect upon passage.

Witness our hands and seal this 2nd day of March 2026.



First Warden Keith Stover

ABSENT

Second Warden Nancy Dodge



Town Councilor Tristan Payne



Town Councilor Margaret O'Neill



Town Councilor William McCombe



Attest: Deputy Town Clerk Laurel Payne