

Chafee signs calamari bill at the Town Dock in Narragansett / recipe

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NARRAGANSETT, R.I. Gov. Lincoln Chafee has signed legislation officially making Rhode Island-style calamari the state's official appetizer.

The Friday afternoon signing, under a brilliant blue sky on the Town Dock in the fishing village of Galilee, was witnessed by a group of politicians and state officials, including the two sponsors of the legislation: Rep. Joseph M. McNamara, D-Warwick, and Sen. V. Susan Sosnowski, D-South Kingstown.

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The General Assembly approved the legislation last week, a nod to the state's dominance of the squid industry. A similar effort died last year in the final night the 2013 session.

Some have criticized the legislation, saying it lacks seriousness. Proponents, however, say it's intended to promote an industry that's crucial to the state.

"When we had sea captains coming into the State House in the middle of a busy season ... we listened," McNamara said Friday.

House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello, who also attended the signing, defended the bill as well.

"Promotion of our multi-million dollar squid industry will help our fishing, hospitality and tourism interests in Rhode Island, all of which serve as integral parts of our economy. 'Rhode Island-style calamari' is on menus in many other states and allows us to draw attention to one of our unique assets," he said in a statement.

"The calamari bill may not rise to the degree of importance that some of our other economic initiatives have, such as lowering our corporate tax and enacting regulatory reform, but it is possible to market our assets and address pressing issues at the same time."

[According to a General Assembly news release, close to 125 Rhode Island vessels fish for squid, bringing in 23.5 million pounds in 2012, with a value of \\$18.6 million, making it the state's most lucrative fishery.](#)

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