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# Audubon Society of Rhode Island

February 22, 2021

Representative Carol Hagen McEntee  
Chair, House Committee on Small Business  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02908

**Re: Audubon Society of Rhode Island Supports H5411, Long Term Economic Development**

Dear Chair McEntee and members of the House Committee on Small Business,

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island and our 17,000 members thank Representatives Cortvriend, Carson, Handy, McGaw, Morales and Kislak for introducing this important piece of legislation. We support the bill and urge you to pass it to the House floor for a vote.

Climate change is already affecting communities throughout Rhode Island. In July of 2020, Senators Shaheen and Whitehouse wrote a compelling opinion piece in the Boston Globe<sup>1</sup>, "Crashing coastal property values and the economic fallout of climate change." The piece says that Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island have already lost \$413 million in coastal property value. They state, "the warnings are clear: the region faces a crash in coastal property values and a devastating economic fallout." Local communities rely on taxes from coastal properties, and this entire system is at risk with the climate crisis.

This bill recommends simple changes to Rhode Island's economic planning and policy development. It will require consideration of data on climate change, sea-level rise and coastal resiliency in the development of the state's long-term economic development vision and policy. And it adds the director of the department of environmental management and the coastal resources management council to the economic development planning council. These additions will bring expertise on current and future climate change impacts to the considerations of the council. These are small and smart changes to make. Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Meg Kerr  
Senior Director of Policy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/07/08/opinion/crashing-coastal-property-values-economic-fallout-climate-change/>