



10 Davol Square, Suite 100
Providence, RI 02903
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March 21, 2024

Chairman Solomon
House Corporations Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill 7616- RI Land Trust Council Supports the Renewable Ready Program

Dear Chair Solomon & Members of the Committee:

The RI Land Trust Council is the coalition of the state's more than 50 land trusts, which are community-based organizations that protect and steward Rhode Island's open spaces, farms, forestland, and historic sites, and natural areas. The Council **supports House Bill 7616** because it promotes the responsible siting and development of renewable energy and alleviates development pressures on our state's forests and important natural areas.

Over the last decade, Rhode Island has seen over 1,000 acres of important forestland and open spaces cut and permanently converted to ground mounted solar. While renewable energy development is critical and necessary for Rhode Island's future, our state's forests and natural areas are equally as important for the numerous benefits that they provide. Whether that be for carbon storage and sequestration, clean air, clean water, connected wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and/or human health benefits, our forests and natural areas provide natural infrastructure important to our climate future.

The Renewable Ready Program is critical to alleviating the development pressure from renewable energy programs on forests and natural areas. It identifies and prioritizes previously disturbed and contaminated areas to be redeveloped, directs the state to seek federal funding to upgrade and redevelop these areas, and incentivizes their development for renewable energy. Passing this legislation is an important step to achieving our mutual goals of maintaining important natural areas and increasing renewable energy development in Rhode Island.

I urge you to pass this important piece of legislation, and would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Sayles", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Kate Sayles, Director