

I, Jennifer Brown, with a bachelor of science in forestry, testify against 2025 -- H 5098 because there are very limited forests in Rhode Island, and they are under continual disturbance, degradation, and reduction. Considering development pressure, pandering, and acquiescence, as well as carelessly composed climate mandates that failed to protect many forests across the state from being clearcut for solar arrays, Rhode Island's mission for healthy forests must be conservation for scarce forests and wooded areas. Forestry can be silviculture, or educated sustainable logging. However, Rhode Island has not been protecting its forests. Even on forest conservation land, aerial maps show that a farm was allowed to cut a large swath out of contiguous forest at Snake Den Park. Forestry does not mean tree removal, and that is how H 5098 will be interpreted. The most important parts of silviculture are planning and careful execution, hopefully conducted by those who've studied ecology or forestry and are qualified, but this will be a green light for any tree removal for any reason as though it is in the interest of forests. H 5098 cannot allow tree removal in all zones under the guise of forestry, but only removing trees for no benefit to forests. We need healthy trees and preserved land for forests to attain their own balance for clean air and water and sound buffering, as well as critical biodiversity our food web and dwindling resources depends on.

Thank you for my two minutes and hearing other testimony on H 5098. A witness said he grew up in the woods, unlike associates. He is from Maine. I also had woods where I grew up in Rhode Island that of course are no longer there in such an expanding commercial and industrial area. His reference to being accustomed to woods promotes woods, forest, or trees, and his advocacy heavily involves Providence wildlife in North Burial Ground. Isn't it sad that the only partially safe place for other species is a cemetery? I don't even want to write that because greedy exploiters ruin everywhere they can. I had to visit the office there because staff were not able to water the trees during drought. This bill is only about tree and habitat removal. It is gaslighting to call it forestry, as it does nothing toward it.

Please note that there are no inputs by tree companies like farmers have. Farmland is expensive to buy or lease, and crops are costly from seeds, amendments, mulch, irrigation, fencing, barns for animals, natural predators, and the countless days tending, planning, protecting, and worrying about them. Agronomy is most successful working with all the species coming thru the site. Its overall benefit to communities justifies tax exemptions. They receive breaks for providing local sustainable food and sequestering carbon for the region. H 5098 is not about tree farms but companies coming along opportunistically to profit from something they made no effort to grow. Arboriculture is not necessarily improving areas, and this bill reads like a giveaway to anyone without

qualifications or interest in forestry or all they affect. I did not pursue my arborist license because I did not want the pesticide and herbicide applicator portion. To allow in all zones means making everywhere vulnerable when we should uphold that forestry means cohesive ecologies.

People who understand forestry know that the concept of old growth applies not only to what Rhode Island currently has but the direction we go. Rhode Island is fortunate to have Nathan Cornell watch and encourage the state to strive to allow forests to age. He is unjustly disparaged by those who disregard how the state makes trees vulnerable which prevents natural forest succession. Undisturbed forests provide the best climate mitigation there is. It is sadly ironic how much energy and computer resources are spent on discussing climate mitigation while allowing forest disturbance.

The bill sponsor should be aware that it is simple to hire skilled people with a chainsaw for dead tree removal, either as an independent contractor or through a company, and I will reach out to her with referrals, if even myself. A quarter century ago, a young man I knew made \$2,000 in less than a week going to properties with fallen trees after a windstorm. Today, entry level at tree companies pays very well and employs many.

I have seen large expensive trucks boasted about, which is also not related to forestry. They have their own cost to run on fossil fuels and are profit-oriented. Draft horses remove logs without impacting soil. Please require environmental entities to prove their benefit before exempting taxes.

I argue that trees, wooded areas, and forests generate public welfare and happiness. The forest products industry does not need such extreme advantages. They're already harvesting enormous value from the community and state with comparatively very little cost and without growing or tending to it. Without connection to an organism or all it interacts with and effects, someone can come along and decide to take it down for profit with nothing related to forestry but state negligence allowing it to be called forestry. Many arborists take and leave slash behind that is a fire hazard, and they do not replace what they have taken with something of value. There is no need to allow that in all zones and exempt from taxes on equipment.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Brown". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jennifer Brown