

FOR: Old Growth Forest Protection Act: **2025 -- H 5294**

To the Members of the RI House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I write in support of H 5294.

Old growth forests are important ecosystems that support native trees, plants, and animals, including birds that reside in or migrate through our state.

Many species of mammals, birds, beneficial insects, and plants depend on the biodiverse habitat provided by old growth forests.

Old growth forests are also important carbon sinks that store more carbon than younger forests.

If the trees are cut down, that stored carbon is released into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change.

Moreover, clear-cutting of old growth forests opens landscapes to overpopulation of white-tailed deer and the growth of invasive plants, which often outcompete native plants and harbor ticks.

Old growth forests that are logged or, worse, clear-cut will not be replaced in our or our children's lifetimes.

Please protect our old growth forests and bring back the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program by passing H 5294.

And Thank You.

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