

Lou Mansolillo

From: Susan Loomis <maggiemae50@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 9:56 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: Old Growth Forest Protection Act

I am writing to you to ask that you please pass the Old Growth Forest Protection Act 2025 H5294, which would create the first state laws to protect forests and biodiversity on public land in Rhode Island. This would include prohibiting clearcutting of forests on state-owned land, protections for Old Growth Forests on public land, and bringing back the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program.

Old Growth Forests are exceptionally rare in Rhode Island with only 1% of the state's forests being over 100 years old. Yet, these Old Growth Forests have a higher degree of native biodiversity, very little to any invasives, are more resistant to wildfires, improve water and soil quality and store more carbon than any other forest.

From 1978-2007, the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program was responsible for identifying, monitoring and protecting native biodiversity and rare and endangered species. However, since the program was defunded in 2007, no state agency has been doing the important work of advocating for and protecting native biodiversity. Also, none of the state's Natural Heritage Areas are protected as **all state forests are currently open to logging!!!**

I am the grandmother of 4 boys and step-grandmother to 6 other children. I am also a URI Master Gardener and beekeeper. On my 1 acre in E. Greenwich, I am fighting invasives and planting native pollinators in their place. I am doing what I can to help save the world for my grandchildren and yours. But I need help. You probably know that trees are the lungs of the Earth, they remove pollutants from the air and release oxygen back into the air. Trees provide protection and homes for birds, insects and mammals. Trees need to be protected so they can protect our world.

PLEASE pass H5294, so we can finally have legal protections for our forests and have a Natural Heritage Program again.

But don't do it for me. **DO IT FOR YOUR GRANDCHILDREN AND THEIR GRANDCHILDREN.**

Thank you,
Susan Loomis
E. Greenwich, RI