

Aquidneck Land Trust

Preserving the Island's open spaces for the lasting benefit of all.

February 25, 2025

Chairman David Bennett
House Environment and Natural Resources
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
Submitted to HouseEnvironmentandNaturalResources@rilegislature.gov

RE: Support House Bill 5342

Dear Chairman Bennett and House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Aquidneck Island Land Trust, a Rhode Island non-profit that preserves and stewards farmland and natural resources across the towns of Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth, we respectfully ask you to support House Bill 5342. As you know, this important bill will direct the General Assembly to create a restricted account from the fees collected through the Division of Agriculture to specifically support our state's agricultural sector. The bill establishes an advisory committee that would determine how the funds should be spent.

Successful farms are vital to a healthy Rhode Island. Rhode Island farms support the state's economy, providing over 2,500 jobs and \$250 million in direct revenue to the state each year. Farms contribute to a healthy food system and make our communities more climate resilient. Despite this importance, farmers face many challenges in Rhode Island. The state has the most expensive farmland in the country and farmers are struggling to find land to farm. A restricted receipt account will help ensure the Division of Agriculture has funding to continue their vital work supporting agricultural viability in the state.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Terry Sullivan
Executive Director