

Lou Mansolillo

From: Cindy Elder <cindyelder@blct.org>
Sent: Monday, January 19, 2026 7:08 AM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Rep. Boylan, Jennifer; Cindy Pierce
Subject: Support for H7071

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Chair Bennett and honorable members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

My name is Cindy Elder and I live in Barrington, RI. I am writing in my capacity as Executive Director of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust and as a private citizen.

I am writing to urge you to support H7071 (Boylan), which would prohibit the importation, transportation, disbursement, distribution, sale, or purchase of any species of non-native (exotic) invasive plants.

The Barrington Land Conservation Trust is a volunteer-powered organization founded in 1979 that has preserved hundreds of acres of conservation land. In addition, we assist the Town in caring for hundreds of additional acres of public preserves. Our volunteer efforts fall into three major buckets: trail maintenance and cleanups, planting of native species, and removal of invasive species. By far, we spend the greatest amount of time removing invasive species, most of which have migrated to conservation land from private property.

We have two volunteer teams: the Tuesday Trails Team, comprised mostly of retired adults, and the Student Stewardship Team, comprised of 14- to 18-year-olds. In addition, we also have more than two dozen volunteer property stewards. These individuals contribute approximately 1,000 hours of volunteer time each year. It is not an overstatement to say that more than one-third of their time is spent removing invasive plants. Just imagine how much more time these volunteers could spend on planting and maintaining properties if we did not have to fight against the constant intrusion of invasive species which threaten the vitality of native plants and habitats.

Rhode Island is one of only five states without a prohibited plant sale list, a list that restricts the sale and distribution of invasive plants, and the only state in New England without one. Invasive plants are a specific category of non-native plant that have been shown to wreak havoc on local ecosystems by spreading exponentially and crowding out native plants species.

This bill would prohibit the sale of these plant species at nurseries, garden centers and anywhere plants are sold in the state.

Please pass this bill out of committee and to the House floor with a recommendation for passage.

Sincerely,

Cindy Elder
Executive Director



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