

To: David Bennett, Chair and Honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
From: Ed Moura, Barrington, RI
Date: January 21, 2026
Re: Support of House Bill 7071

As a resident of this state and small business owner 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.

As I'm sure by now that you have heard, or certainly will soon hear from other concerned residents in our area, that Rhode Island is now one of only four states in the country, and the only one in New England, without a prohibited plant sale list, a list that restricts the sale and distribution of invasive plants. These plants are a specific category of non-native plant that have been shown to wreak havoc on local ecosystems by rapidly spreading and crowding out native plant species, thereby destroying our local ecosystems and habitat for both flora, fauna, and beneficial insects.

Take a walk in the woods, or along any bike path and you will readily see the massive infestation of bittersweet vines, multiflora rose, barberry, callery pear, burning bush, autumn olive, invasive honeysuckle, or privet crowding out or strangling the most beneficial native plants. All of these plants were at one time intentionally sold and planted, in fact extensive research has shown that most of the invasive plants we struggle with today were at one time planted intentionally. Maybe decades ago when these types of plants were introduced we did not know what the outcome could be, but now we do and there is absolutely no need whatsoever for these types of plants to be available for sale or to be planted as there are much better options. As a nursery owner myself I know that the growing demand from consumers is for plants that help, not harm ecosystems. And indeed many nurseries have already voluntarily ceased the sale of any invasive plants. Allowing a select number of businesses to continue the sale of plants that have been shown to cause harm to our environment benefits a select few while harming many.

Our neighboring states have already figured this out; lists of invasive plants are already available and need not be compiled from scratch. It would not be a heavy lift for the state to initially implement or manage updates to the list going forward. The actual heavy lift is the managing and removal in the field of these plants and replanting of beneficial natives, where the burden falls mostly on landowners / land stewards, homeowners, and the public at large.

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. Thank you for your time and consideration. Our future on this earth depends on protecting biodiversity and ecosystems for generations to come. This is a simple, straightforward measure that Rhode Island lawmakers can take to signal that our state wants to work towards that viable future for all.

Respectfully,
Ed