

Written Testimony to Ban Invasive Plant Purchase in RI

in RITO: Chair Bennett and members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Email: HouseEnvironmentandNaturalResources@rilegislature.gov

CC: Rep. Jennifer Boylan and Senator Pam Lauria

FROM: Gail Read

RE: Support for H7071

DATE: 1-21-2026

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

My name is Gail Read, I'm the President of Barrington Farm School and I live in Barrington.

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.

I have worked professionally in the horticultural industry for forty years, working at Blithewold Manor, Gardens and Arboretum for over 30 years and I have battled invasive plants for my entire professional career. I have seen firsthand how these invasive exotic plants destroy our native habitats, reducing biodiversity of both flora and fauna native habitats. I have also spent considerable time trying to eradicate these invasive plants and know how tenacious they can be in their aggressive growth behavior. It becomes overwhelming to control their destructive growth or even manage to contain them. The rate of their growth and their invasive nature is alarming. I am now continuing to manage invasive plants at Barrington Farm School both in our farm fields and wooded conservation area. There are so many wonderful native species that are now readily available for people to choose to plant. Education is essential for both consumers and nursery growers to realize how important a native landscape can be to keep our ecosystems and home landscapes thriving. This bill is needed now more than ever!

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 plants that have been shown to wreak havoc on local ecosystems by spreading exponentially and crowding out native plant 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,



Gail Read

President

Barrington Farm School