

Lou Mansolillo

From: Janelle Heise <jlisah@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 3:49 PM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Rep. Speakman, June
Subject: Support for H7071

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Chair Bennett and honorable members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:
My name is Janelle Heise and I live in Warren.

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.

Almost four years ago, I moved to Rhode Island from New Jersey, where I served for years on an invasive plant species strike force. We surveyed trails and woodland areas for invasive species, removed them, and monitored endangered native plant species, among other tasks. My heart sank when I moved to Warren and saw groves of Callery Pear and Autumn Olive at Haile's Farm Preserve, Oriental bittersweet trying to strangle plantings in front of the George Hail library, lesser celandine and burning bush at Bristol Audubon, wisteria growing 40 feet up in trees in Barrington. Because invasive species usually come from countries with a similar latitude, such as China, but don't have natural predators here in the U.S. to keep them in check, they outcompete native species that provide considerable habitat value for birds, insects, and animals. With climactic changes already stressing our ecosystems, limiting the changes caused by invasives is key.

You most likely know that birds eat the fruit that invasive plants produce, and wherever they poop the seeds out, it's a pre-fertilized package that very easily takes hold in the new location. I have been pulling invasive plant seedlings out of my Warren lawn every year, the ones that sprout under the electric wire the birds sit on. I don't have Japanese barberry or burning bush on my property, but I still have to deal with it.

It is an **embarrassment** that we are one of only 5 states in the country without a prohibited plant sale list, and the only one in New England. H7071 would prohibit the sale of invasive plant species at nurseries, garden centers, and anywhere plants are sold. I have heard that the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscaping Association has not supported previous attempts to pass an invasive species ban. To that I say look to the many "plant this, not that" websites, such as <https://northamericanlandtrust.org/plant-this-not-that-native-plant-substitutes-for-invasive-species/>.

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

Sincerely,
Janelle Heise, Warren RI

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“The global challenges now facing humanity are a severe test of its willingness to put aside short-term self-interest and come to terms with this stark spiritual and moral reality: there is but one, interconnected human family and it shares one precious homeland.” UHJ Jan 4, 2022