



Audubon Society of Rhode Island

January 22, 2026

Rhode Island House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Rhode Island State House 82

Smith Street Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Support for H 7071 - Rhode Island Invasive Plant Management Act

Dear Chairman Bennett:

On behalf of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island (ASRI), I write to express our strong support for H. 7071, the Rhode Island Invasive Plant Management Act. This legislation represents a critical step forward in protecting our state's native ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity.

Invasive plants pose one of the most significant threats to Rhode Island's natural heritage. Non-native species such as Japanese knotweed, multiflora rose, and glossy buckthorn have already degraded thousands of acres of wildlife habitat across our state. These aggressive plants outcompete native vegetation that our birds, pollinators, and other wildlife depend upon for food and shelter. When native plant communities are displaced, the entire ecological web suffers, from insects to songbirds to the mammals that rely on healthy forest understories.

Rhode Island has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in invasive species management. Many of our neighboring states have already enacted similar protective measures. This legislation would help prevent our state from becoming a pathway for invasive plants to spread throughout the region while protecting the ecological integrity that makes Rhode Island special.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island has witnessed firsthand the degradation invasive plants cause to the wildlife refuges, sanctuaries, and natural areas we manage across the state. Our staff and volunteers spend countless hours attempting to control invasive species that could have been prevented from establishing in the first place. This bill would be an invaluable tool in protecting habitats for future generations.

We urge the Committee to support H. 7071 and advance this important conservation measure.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to protecting Rhode Island's natural resources.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hall, Executive Director Audubon Society of Rhode Island

cc: Representatives Boylan

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