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From: Joella Adams <joella.adams@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 8:54 PM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Rep_Knight; Rep. Boylan, Jennifer
Subject: Support for H7071, Invasive Plant Hearing Testimony for Jan. 22

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

As a scientist and public health researcher and as a frequent user of Rhode Island's green spaces, I strongly urge you to support H7071, which would prohibit the importation, transportation, disbursement, distribution, sale, or purchase of non-native (exotic) invasive plant species.

It is heartbreaking to walk through our parks and green spaces and see them overtaken by invasive plants. These species crowd out native vegetation, reduce biodiversity, and degrade habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. Areas meant for recreation and restoration have become less resilient, and because these plants spread so aggressively, many people do not realize how widespread the problem has become.

I am a frequent user of the East Bay Bike Path and Japanese knotweed and bittersweet have expanded dramatically along the path. People may not even notice but our environment is changing, quickly, right before our eyes. At the same time, I have also seen how targeted management and early intervention can successfully control these species and allow native plants to recover.

We must take this issue seriously and enact legislation that prevents the introduction and continued sale of known invasive plants, making it easier and more cost-effective to rehabilitate and protect Rhode Island's natural spaces. Preventing new infestations is far less expensive than managing established ones. Please pass this bill out of committee and to the House floor with a recommendation for passage.

Thank you,

Joella Adams, MPH, PhD

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