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From: Lynne Seacord and David Mehl <mehl.seacord@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2026 3:32 PM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Rep. Boylan, Jennifer
Subject: Support for House bill 7071

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

My name is Lynne Seacord. I am a resident of Barrington, RI, and am a Master Gardener, a member of the Barrington Garden Club, and one of the co-Stewards of the Town's Resilience Garden. I am writing in support of House Bill 7071, sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Boylan and others, which would prohibit the importation, transportation, disbursement, sale or purchase of any terrestrial species of non-native plants deemed invasive by the Department of Environmental Management.

Why is this important? Invasive non-native species, the majority of which have been introduced by intentional sale and planting, can spread through seed disbursement and other means to unintended locations. Here, they outcompete with native plants. The loss of native plants in turn negatively affects biodiversity, wildlife habitats and the resilience of the ecosystem. Once established, these invasive plants are difficult to remove and their negative impacts on the ecosystem increase with time.

My property in Barrington abuts Sowams Woods, a beautiful 12-acre forest adjoining Echo Lake and crisscrossed with trails. The property is managed by the Barrington Land Trust and was a sacred birthing place for women of the Pokanoket tribe for thousands of years. Its serene beauty, however, is marred by the incursion of numerous invasive species. In some ways, the forest is an object lesson on how species purchased in nurseries have "escaped" from suburban landscapes. There is a Kousa dogwood tree in the forest less than 50 yards from a neighborhood backyard. In the fall, the bright leaves of Winged Euonymous, or Burning Bush, are seen throughout the underbrush; the same Euonymous species we removed from our yard when we moved in 6 years ago. Improbably, there is a large patch of Lily of the Valley in the forest. And the Land Trust constantly battles other invasives including Oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose and Japanese Knotweed.

Rhode Island is one of only five states in the nation which do not prohibit the sale of invasive plants and is the only state in New England which does not. In the face of shrinking wildlife habit, of climate change, and the precipitous decline in bird and insect populations, the prohibition of the sale of invasive plants is, in my opinion, a "no brainer." There are over 3000 species of beautiful native plants in the region, with plants adaptable to the suburban landscape which outperform and outshine the invasives whose sales we would limit. A

simple shift in focus by nurseries to these native plants would more than mitigate any loss of income to those nurseries.

I urge the Committee to vote favorably on House Bill 7071. Thank you.

Best,

Lynne Seacord M.D.