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From: SUSAN DUNN <suedunn@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 3:24 PM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Cc: Rep. Hopkins, Marie A.; Sen. Appollonio, Peter A. Jr.
Subject: House Bill 7071

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

My name is Susan Dunn. I am a resident of Warwick, RI, am a Master Gardener and an avid birder. I have spent numerous hours in the woods/forested areas of RI in all seasons and enjoy the beauty of our natural areas.

Several years ago I participated in surveying the state for the Bird Atlas, a joint effort by Audubon Society of RI and the RIDEM. One of my survey quadrants was Roger Williams Park. If you are familiar with the beautiful Park, or have spent many hours walking the Park, you will notice that it is loaded with invasive species that have spread by birds, mammals and wind for many years. Many of the invasive plants were recommended plantings many years ago and now can be found all over the Park grounds. One planting, the Tree of Heaven, is a difficult to remove invasive tree and is a host plant for the Spotted Lantern Fly, now here in RI and a threat to our agriculture.

In the Park and in many woodland and forest settings, invasive plants outcompete 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.

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.

Sincerely,

Susan Dunn

Warwick

Rep District 21

Senate District 29