

Sakonnet Preservation

Conserving land  Preserving Little Compton

RE: H 7074 - Highway Beautification with Pollinator-Friendly Native Species

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Stewardship Director

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Position: IN SUPPORT

Dear Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing as the Stewardship Director of Sakonnet Preservation Association to express our strong support for H 7074, which would require the Department of Transportation to plant pollinator-friendly native species along state roadways and highways.

Rhode Island's roadsides and highway corridors represent thousands of acres of public land that could serve as vital pollinator habitat. By requiring the planting of native, pollinator-friendly species, H 7074 would transform these corridors into productive habitat that supports our declining pollinator populations while beautifying our state's roadways.

Native plant communities not only support more biodiversity, but they also require less maintenance to remain open in the long run when established properly. This makes them both ecologically superior and more cost-effective than non-native ornamentals traditionally used in roadside plantings, some of which have proven to be aggressive non-natives. As stewards of conserved lands adjacent to state roads in the Sakonnet region, we would directly benefit from native roadside plantings that create habitat corridors and reduce invasive species pressure on our properties.

This bill has the potential to amplify the great work already underway by a diverse group of Rhode Island-based organizations that collect native seed, propagate it, and distribute it to public and private spaces all around the state. By creating significant demand for locally-sourced native plants, H 7074 would support these homegrown conservation enterprises while expanding pollinator habitat across our transportation network.

The requirement that DOT seek input from apiarists, horticulturists, and other certified professionals ensures that plantings will be scientifically informed and appropriate for Rhode Island's ecosystems. This is a smart, forward-thinking approach to infrastructure management that benefits both people and wildlife.

I urge you to support H 7074.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Yorks
Stewardship Director
Sakonnet Preservation Association



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