



Via Electronic Mail

March 25, 2026

The Honorable David Bennett
Chair, House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
House Lounge, State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: CLF **Supports** House Bill No. 7991 – Nature-Based Solutions and Expedited Permitting

Dear Chair Bennett:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 7991, which provides an expedited permitting process for nature-based solutions. We offer our enthusiastic support for this bill.

Founded in 1966, CLF is a member-supported non-profit advocacy organization working to protect public health and the environment and build healthy communities in Rhode Island and throughout New England. CLF supports policies that increase climate resiliency while prioritizing nature-based solutions.

The effects of climate change have reached all 400 miles of Rhode Island’s coast. We have seen severe flooding plague the entire state this fall and winter, erosion at our beaches, rising sea levels, and loss of power from storms. Since 2000, tidal flooding in some areas of Rhode Island has increased by 380%, damaging roads and infrastructure.¹ Extreme weather events are increasing in severity and frequency. Nature-based resiliency projects, like living shorelines and urban green infrastructure, are proven solutions for protecting communities and ecosystems from the impacts of climate change.

By identifying and prioritizing the most ecologically beneficial projects, H-7991 shortens a project’s timeline and reduces its costs. Making proven projects easier to implement is an impactful way of increasing climate resilience in our communities and our infrastructure, from which Rhode Islanders will benefit.

CLF respectfully urges passage of H-7991. Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

¹ *Rhode Island’s Sea Level Is Rising*, SeaLevelRise.org (last visited Mar. 24, 2026)
<https://sealevelrise.org/states/rhode-island/>.



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Ritter".

Erin Ritter
Program Coordinator, Rhode Island
Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation