

**Testimony in support of H7914: Natural Forest Protection Act**

Dr. Hans Scholl, 71 Fales Avenue, Barrington, RI 02806

Date of Hearing: March 31, 2026

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

Rhode Island is currently the only state in New England without protected wildlands on public land, in particular without protection of forests in their natural state from logging.

I support the bill because it reinstates the Natural Heritage Program and provides means to protect the RI forests by prohibiting

- extractive logging conducted in natural area preserves (with exceptions named in the bill),
- even-age logging on state-owned land (with exceptions named in the bill),
- use of forestry vehicles in natural area preserves.

This will allow for returning our forest to a more natural state over time, for the benefit of a biodiverse nature and of all current and future generations of Rhode Islanders.

Please bring the bill to a vote in 2026.

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to Representative Shanley for introducing this important bill.



Dr. Hans Scholl

Mar 30, 2026

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