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From: Pat Foley <patdafolee@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 5:59 PM
To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: I support H7914

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Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

I support the Natural Forest Protection Act H 7914, and hope that you will too. Rhode Island needs its first state law protecting our public forests and biodiversity. We are currently the only state in New England with no wild lands - public forests protected in their natural state and with logging strictly controlled and limited.

Our state's limited stands of mature trees and later successional habitat on our public lands - places with the greatest concentration of native plants, birds and animals face significant clearcutting and other destructive logging practices that remove most of the trees from a forest destroying the tree canopy.

This destructive logging harms native biodiversity, causes invasives to spread, increases the risk of wildfire, disturbs the soil and pollutes waterways, causes erosion, creates tick habitat, and contributes to Climate Change from the carbon lost when the trees in a forest are logged.

The Natural Forest Protection Act H 7914 would preserve our state's forests by:

- Creating 46 natural area preserves in Rhode Island to protect rare state-owned forests including Old Growth Forests, intact Core Forests, and Natural Heritage Areas where rare and endangered species live.
- Prohibit clearcut logging on all state-owned land including logging practices that involve removing a majority of the trees from a forest. Selective logging management where some trees can be cut, but not too many in order to retain the tree canopy, would still be permitted in forests that are not Natural Area Preserves.
- Require environmental review by Natural Heritage Program scientists before public state logging operations. Currently foresters 'loggers,' conduct the 'environmental' review.
- Bring back the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program after 19 years to once again protect rare and endangered species. Currently, no state agency is doing this important work since supporting gaming species is a higher priority to the state DEM than protecting native biodiversity because of the money DEM gets from hunting licenses.

Please join me and the many Rhode Islanders who care about our natural areas and vote to support H7914.

Appreciatively,
Patrick Foley
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