



**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
235 Promenade Street, Room 425  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

March 31, 2026

The Honorable David A. Bennett  
Chairman  
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**Re: H 7916 An Act Relating to Parks and Recreational Areas – General Provisions**

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 7916, which would legalize the practice of harvesting mushrooms from public lands in addition to provisions relating to milk. DEM has concerns with the provisions of the bill that would allow public harvesting of mushrooms from state property.

In general, DEM is opposed to the practice of collecting or harvesting items on public lands. DEM regulations (250-RICR-100-00-7.20) currently prohibit the removal of “any tree, stone walls, natural element or feature...shrub or vegetation” without written permission. Rhode Island’s public lands are intended to be for the public good rather than personal or commercial purposes. We are concerned that this legislation, though well-intentioned, would set a precedent that our state’s public lands are open for the harvesting of other resources in the future.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. For further information, please contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of Legislative Affairs, at [ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov](mailto:ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov) should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Terrence Gray, P.E.  
Director

CC: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
The Honorable David Place  
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director