

May 27, 2026

State House, 82 Smith Street

Providence, RI 02903

Dear House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

My name is Joanna Hughes. I'm a high school student who lives in Smithfield, part of your constituency. One of my favorite things about the area I live in is the abundance of wildlife. I love waking up to hear birds chirping, going outside to smell the forest breeze, and falling asleep to the chorus of crickets. However, these wonders of nature are under threat. Microplastics have become more of a widespread issue lately, and its effects on the environment are obvious. In order to stop them before it's too late, I urge you all to vote in favor of the RI Recycling Reform Act (H7911).

As you may know, this act aims to reduce the amount of plastics that end up in the environment. It's easy for this to happen in our current system because of how difficult it is to properly recycle. When improperly recycled items get to a recycling plant, they cannot be processed and are instead sent to the landfill. The plastics then break down, creating microplastics. These enter the soil, water, and every other crevice of the environment. According to the National Library of Medicine, exposure to microplastics can cause a number of issues in a variety of animals. Reproductive systems in particular have been shown to take damage. In a world where many species are at risk of extinction, this is critical. By reducing the amount of microplastics in the environment, animals can recover from this and we can maintain biodiversity.

Thank you for reading this. I know that it's not just me who cares about this. Many young people share my concerns about the environment, and we want to inherit a healthy world. To

help save our planet and to give young people hope, I believe you should vote in favor of the RI Recycling Reform Act.

Sincerely,

Joanna Hughes