



January 27, 2022

House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02908

Re: In support of H7066, the Old-Growth Forest Preservation Act

Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Please know that the thousands of supporters of the Old-Growth Forest Network (OGFN) strongly **support the passage of H7066**, the Old-Growth Forest Preservation Act which would establish protections for old-growth forests and rare native forests on public land in Rhode Island. OGFN is the first national organization working specifically to preserve ancient forests for the enjoyment of present and future generations. In counties capable of supporting forest growth we identify at least one forest that will be forever protected from logging and open to the public. Then we help families connect with these forests. The result will be a national network of treasured forests where all generations can experience native biodiversity and the beauty of nature. We are called to do this work because so few old forests remain. Less than 1%!

Yet old forests are so important because:

- The older a forest is the better it cleans the air of pollutants.
- The older a forest is the more storm water it can capture and purify.
- The older a forest is the more different species will be found there, from birds to snails to ferns.
- The older a forest is the more attractive it is for ecotourism.

We need to save examples of older forests to understand and appreciate our native ecosystem. We cannot depend on private forest owners to save these examples. Preserving the last remaining old-growth forests on our state lands is the perfect solution.

This legislation would make old growth forests a priority in Rhode Island and prevent the accidental destruction of these rare, invaluable ecosystems. **We ask the Committee to vote in favor of this important legislation** which if passed could put Rhode Island ahead of the nation in the preservation of old growth forests.

Thank you for making the right choice for our forests and for the future generations.

Sincerely,

Joan Maloof, PhD
Founder and Director

Sarah RobbGrieco
Northeast Regional Manager