

# **DEFENDERS OF ANIMALS, INC.**

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**May 12, 2025**

**House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903**

**Dear Committee Members:**

**On behalf of our supporters, members, and board members, I am respectfully requesting that you vote against House Bill H-5781, which pertains to state forests for the following reasons:**

- **Clearing of trees signifies a huge loss of tree cover and forests. It is the forests where most of the wildlife live; therefore, shrinking forests due to deforestation would have serious effects on wildlife in Rhode Island.**
- **The World Wildlife Fund's Living planet report of 2020 points out a catastrophic decline in wildlife. According to the report, in the last 50 years, the wildlife population that includes mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles has declined by two-thirds. One of the main culprits of this rapid decline in wildlife population across the globe is deforestation. Rhode Island would not be an exception.**
- **Deforestation, in fact, leads to species extinction and devoid wildlife of their home, food sources, and exposes them to increased predation risk.**

- **When a deforested area shrinks, it can lead to some species going extinct.**
- **Deforestation leads to Habitat Loss. Habitat loss drastically impacts the animal population in that area and leads to a severe loss of wildlife.**
- **The loss of habitat is the most damaging impact of deforestation on wildlife. According to the IUCN's red list, habitat loss due to deforestation is the biggest threat to more than 80% of wildlife globally.**
- **Deforestation leads to encroachment of the human population on forest land and animal habitats. This leads to the confrontation of wildlife with humans. It can prove devastating for the wildlife in those areas.**
- **Deforestation and clearing of land also mean more vehicle activities in the wildlife habitat. It is likely to increase the number of wildlife/vehicle crashes.**

**Sincerely yours,**

***Dennis Tabella***

**Dennis Tabella  
Director**