

March 5, 2026

Representative Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence RI 02908

Re: The Nature Conservancy testimony in Support of H7127, Article 3 Section 6-7, Big River Management Area

Dear Chair Abney,

The Nature Conservancy is grateful for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Article 3, Sections 6-7 in the FY 2027 budget.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Here in Rhode Island, The Nature Conservancy protects more than 15,000 acres of land and has partnered on the permanent conservation of more than 35,000 acres of land. We do much of our work to protect and restore our natural environment in partnership – including with State agencies such as the Department of Environmental Management.

The Nature Conservancy recognizes that DEM is tasked with the tremendous responsibility of protecting Rhode Island's natural assets, including lands, waterways, beaches, ports, farms, and more. This work is essential to maintaining the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the state. We are strongly supportive of a budget that provides DEM with the funding they need to fully manage these resources.

TNC strongly supports Article 3, Sections 6 & 7 of this budget to transfer ownership of Big River Management Area to RIDEM. Big River Management Area is a significant Rhode Island conservation area, serving as critical habitat and part of a larger connected network of resilient lands. RIDEM has been managing this land since the 1960s and is the most qualified agency to make decisions and most effectively manage this land, including a forest management plan that is being created in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy. This transfer represents the designation of a definite purpose of this land as conservation land for public benefit in perpetuity.

Sincerely,



Angela Tuoni
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The Nature Conservancy
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