

February 24, 2026

To: RI House of Representatives, Finance Committee Chair, Marvin Abney

From: Everett Stuart, 406 Stony Lane, North Kingstown, RI 02852 (evstuart@verizon.net)

RE: Proposed amendment to the *2026 Green Bond, House Bill 7127 Article 6 with comments*

I am writing in support of the addition of \$10 million to the proposed 2026 Green Bond for the conservation of open space lands, farmland, and recreation purposes.

History has shown that RI voters strongly and consistently support state bond funding to aid in the protection of open land, farms, and recreational lands. The voters statewide clearly value the air quality, water quality, aesthetics, and serene sense of place provided by forests, open fields, farms, wetlands and other conservation lands.

As a retired career employee of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, most of that time in Rhode Island, I have a keen appreciation for these conservation lands. Having worked on, hiked, and visited hundreds of acres of farms, wildlife refuges, and other open lands, I appreciate their contribution to Rhode Island's ecology, social fabric and economy. Many private landowners seek to preserve their long-held family open lands, but in order to retire, or perhaps settle an estate, they need to realize some financial return to be able to afford the land's conservation. I have seen many instances where state open space funding provided the critical match money needed to realize this family's dream. Bond funds used to add to important state-owned open lands and to municipal and local nonprofit land trust conservation areas will provide a permanent legacy that will benefit the public in so many ways

In summary, I support the proposed addition of \$10 million to the 2026 Green Bond to help conserve vital open lands throughout Rhode Island. Thank you for your consideration of this important amendment.