

FROM: Cheryl Hatch, Middletown  
RE: SUPPORT - House Bill 8144  
DATE: April 14, 2026  
TO: Rep. Marvin Abney, Chair, RI House Finance Committee

Dear Representative Abney,

I'm writing to ask for your support for **H8144** and **\$17.5 Million in additional conservation funding in the FY 2027 Green Economy Bond.**

**In particular, the need for \$10 Million for conservation programs is critical.** We need farmland, state and local open space and recreational open space to maintain this quality of life and the state's economy.

I come from generations of people who have lived and made a living on Aquidneck Island, including my late father, Col. John F. Hatch, Jr. Development threatens every unprotected piece of land in Rhode Island. Rhode Islanders from all walks of life benefit from natural spaces—from small urban parks to large DEM properties, contact with nature promotes mental and physical health.

We especially cannot afford to allow agriculture to become financially unsustainable for our farming families. This bill is a critical tool for leverage. For every \$1.00 spent on conservation in the state is matched by \$1.70 in federal and philanthropic funding.

Thank you for your consideration and for all your hard work on behalf of Aquidneck Islanders and all residents of the state of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Hatch

301 Green End Avenue, Middletown, RI 02842