



April 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House

**RE: Testimony In Support of House Bill 8144-- AN ACT RELATING TO CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM -- 2026 BOND REFERENDA**

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, I am writing to express our strong support for the state's Green Bond legislation, and specifically for the inclusion of Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England's Camp Rocky Farm Mariner Cabin and Program Center.

The Green Bond is a powerful tool in advancing Rhode Island. By protecting open space, strengthening climate resilience, and ensuring public access to Rhode Island's natural assets, this legislation supports not only environmental sustainability but also community wellbeing.

At United Way, we are committed to building a stronger, more equitable Rhode Island where every person—especially every young person—has access to opportunity, connection, and the resources they need to thrive.

Camp Rocky Farm on Aquidneck Island is a remarkable example of how these priorities come together. As a unique 8-acre property, it offers rare and valuable access to the outdoors for young people and families. Preserving this land through the Green Bond ensures it remains an accessible, community-centered resource in a region where open space is increasingly limited.

The proposed Mariner Cabin and Program Center builds on that foundation by expanding access in meaningful ways. By increasing capacity for year-round programming and enabling an additional 500 youth to stay overnight each year, this project will open the door for more young people—particularly those who may not otherwise have access—to experience the benefits of time outdoors, hands-on learning, and positive youth development.

We know that connection matters. In a time when many young people are facing increased isolation, investments like this create spaces where youth can build relationships, develop confidence, and engage with the natural world in ways that support both their mental health and their long-term success.

The inclusion of Camp Rocky Farm in the Green Bond reflects a smart, holistic investment—one that preserves Rhode Island's natural resources while expanding opportunity and strengthening communities.

We respectfully urge your support for the Green Bond legislation and for this important project.

Sincerely,  
Cortney Nicolato  
President & CEO  
United Way of Rhode Island