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Sent via email to: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

April 14, 2026

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Save The Bay SUPPORT for House Bill 8144 – Amended Green Economy and Clean Energy Bond Proposal

Save The Bay strongly supports the proposed Green Economy and Clean Energy Bond proposal as described in House Bill 8144 by Representative Cotter. While we support all the items in the proposed \$50 million Green Economy and Clean Energy Bond in the Governor's proposed FY27 budget, that proposal failed to include funding for farmland preservation, local and statewide open space, and outdoor recreation grants – funding that is badly needed. We also support the inclusion of funding for Fort Adams and the Mariner Academy and Program Center at Camp Rocky Farm which support public access, conservation and recreation.

H8144 proposes \$7M in funding for Narragansett Bay Watershed Restoration which will improve the health of Narragansett Bay by reducing nonpoint source pollution, improving stormwater management, reducing nutrient pollution and restoring coastal and riparian buffers. The legislation also proposes \$20M in funding for the new Resilient Rhody Infrastructure Fund established by the General Assembly last year. This funding would provide both our coastal and inland communities with critical funding to address the various impacts of climate change.

H8144, importantly, includes \$10M in funding for land conservation programs that were not included in H7127, including:

- \$3 million for the State Open Space Program, which enables the State to acquire and conserve lands of statewide significance, including ecologically valuable landscapes that enhance DEM's management areas, parks, and important forests.
- \$3 million for the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program, a competitive matching grant program that supports municipalities in acquiring, developing, and rehabilitating outdoor recreational lands and facilities.

- \$2 million for Farmland Preservation through the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission (ALPC). Preserving farmland keeps land in production, supports farm families, and strengthens Rhode Island's local food system.
- \$2 million for the Local Open Space Matching Grant Program which provides up to 50% matching funds for municipalities, land trusts, and nonprofit conservation organizations to protect valuable open spaces in local communities.

Land conservation makes Rhode Island a better place to live and improves our economy through local agriculture, tourism and outdoor recreation. These are dollars well spent: every \$1 spent on conservation by the state is matched by \$1.70 in federal or philanthropic funding. These programs do not conflict with the state's goals to increase housing; we can – and must - do both.

We appreciate Representative Cotter's efforts to, again, "make the green bond greener" and urge the Generally Assembly to amend the proposed FY27 budget to include all the proposed bond funding in H8144. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jed Thorp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jed Thorp
Director of Advocacy