

April 13, 2026

Karen Griffith
Bristol, RI 02809
Re: Support for House Bill 8144

Dear Chair of House Finance, Chairman Marvin Abney,

I am a resident of Bristol and an employee of Barrington Farm School, and I am writing regarding the critical need for an additional \$17.5 Million in funding for conservation in the FY2027 Green Economy Bond. Given the dire climate change situation and Rhode Island's vulnerable coastal location, it is critical that we act quickly to preserve open space, support regenerative agriculture, and do everything we can to build sustainable, resilient communities. Postponing conservation until later is no longer an option if we want to have a livable world for future generations.

Investing in conservation makes good economic sense too. Every dollar spent by the state on conservation is matched by \$1.70 in federal and philanthropic funding. Conserved lands are available to the public for recreational uses that bring visitors to our state. Conserved lands preserve farmland that helps address food justice, food insecurity, and the health of our residents. And, conserved lands are a cost-effective way to help fight the effects of climate change by filtering and cleaning stormwater, cooling our cities, absorbing and storing carbon dioxide, and providing valuable habitat for our native flora and fauna.

I am asking you to include at least \$17.5 Million to the Green Bond to ensure that there is funding available for vital conservation programs to preserve open space, address climate change, provide valuable recreational opportunities, and support our farmers.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I strongly urge the committee to include \$17.5 Million in additional funding for the FY 2027 Green Economy Bond, including \$10 Million for conservation programs.”

Sincerely,
Karen Griffith