

Trafton testimony in behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island supporting H8144 for House Finance Committee April 14, 2026.

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

I'm Peter Trafton from Providence, co-chair of policy for the Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) writing in strongest support of 8144, by Rep Cotter and colleagues to provide additional funding for this year's planned "Green Bond". Specifically, I write regarding a \$10 million addition to support otherwise underfunded opportunities that will help preserve open space within our small state. These are

1. Farmland preservation, to protect working farms through the agricultural land preservation commission.
2. Local open space grants to provide matching grants to municipalities land trusts and nonprofit conservation groups for acquiring open space or conservation easements.
3. Statewide open space funds to support the state land acquisition program, making land available to Rhode Islanders and visitors for outdoor activities, through matching funds that require such expenditures.
4. Outdoor recreation grants to create new or improved community facilities which promote outdoor activities and their health benefits for all users.

Our request should be familiar. The same thing happened 2 years ago when the Gov.'s budget failed to provide funding for such conservation land acquisition. Thanks to the General Assembly's efforts such funds were made available than, and we hope sincerely that another such rather small request for addition to the bond package will be met for the same purposes - to improve access to open land and the enjoyment and health benefits it provides.

The Environment Council of Rhode Island considers H 8144 one of our four top priority legislative actions this year, and we hope that your Committee and the full House will feel similarly and provide support for an essential part of what makes Rhode Island an attractive and healthy place to live.

Thanks very much for considering my comments in ECRI's behalf.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Trafton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Trafton