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April 13, 2026

To: Chair of House Finance
Chairman Marvin Abney
Rhode Island House of Representatives

Re: Support for House Bill 8144 – FY2027 Green Economy Bond Funding

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 8144 and to urge full and sustained investment in the FY2027 Green Economy Bond, which supports Rhode Island's Outdoor Recreation Grant Program and related conservation initiatives.

The Town of Warren is proud to be a recipient of this program, receiving \$434,100 for improvements to Veterans Field. This project will include new athletic field lighting, ADA-accessible bleachers and pathways, tree plantings, and updated signage—enhancements that will improve accessibility, safety, and community use of a vital public space.

This investment, supported by voter-approved green bonds and administered through the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management under Governor Dan McKee, reflects a proven partnership between the state and municipalities to strengthen public infrastructure and quality of life. Importantly, these are true partnerships. Every municipality is required to provide both cash and in-kind matching funds, ensuring local investment and maximizing the impact of every state dollar.

Demand for this program continues to significantly exceed available resources. In this cycle alone, communities requested over \$15.1 million, while only \$5.79 million was awarded to 15 of Rhode Island's 39 municipalities. While Warren is grateful to be included, this gap demonstrates the clear need for increased and sustained investment.

As you consider the FY2027 budget, I respectfully urge the committee to avoid any reduction in funding that would weaken this highly successful program. Proposed funding levels of \$1 million are not sufficient to meet statewide need or maintain momentum for community improvements.

Therefore, I urge the committee to include \$17.5 million in additional funding for the FY2027 Green Economy Bond, including \$10 million for conservation programs. This investment is necessary to ensure Rhode Island communities can continue to develop safe, accessible, and high-quality public recreation spaces.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of Rhode Island's cities and towns.

Sincerely,

Tara K. Thibaudeau
Town of Warren