

April 14, 2026

Honorable Chairman Mr. Marvin Abney

House Finance Committee

RI State House

Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Abney and the Members of this Committee,

My name is Tyler Maikath, and I am a resident of Warwick who serves on the Warwick Land Trust. I am fortunate enough to benefit from protected open space in my community and am writing today in strong support of H.B. 8144, which would add \$17.5 million to the FY 27 Green Economy Bond. I am very passionate about nature, outdoor recreation, farmland and food production, and ensuring equitable access to nature statewide. Within a couple of miles from my house, I can visit protected open space at Rocky Point State Park, Morris Farm, Conimicut Point Park and Rocky Point Blueberry Farm. State funding was essential for these acquisitions to occur. I wish every citizen of Rhode Island was as fortunate as I am to have close access to farms, recreational facilities, wild nature, and to walk, swim, fish, play sports, boat, and birdwatch. I am also very concerned about the impacts of climate change on the ways of life for all Rhode Islanders and on the natural environment and beauty that draws us all closer to our home state.

I was extremely disappointed that the Governor's budget did not include any funding for land conservation, especially considering how Rhode Islanders have a very positive view of conservation. H.B. 8144 would add this crucial open space funding back to the Green Economy Bond along with very important funding for outdoor recreation, which is always underfunded. These additions to the bill will add great value to the daily lives of Rhode Islanders with more opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and all the benefits that it brings. I also strongly advocate for the \$2 million within H.B. 8144 for farmland preservation to be used by the Agricultural Lands Preservation Committee (ALPC). Rhode Island has the most expensive farmland in the country and farms are in crisis. Farmland preservation pays for the difference between an unrestricted property that can be developed for any use and a forever-preserved farm. These funds help farmers invest in their farms and pay down debt.

The \$17.5 million addition to the Green Economy Bond is an essential investment for the state, drawing tourists from around New England, who spend money at small businesses. Additionally, every \$1 spent by the state on land conservation is matched by \$1.70 in federal and philanthropic funding. I strongly urge the Committee to support this important addition to the Green Economy Bond. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tyler Maikath
Warwick Land Trust