



Rhode Island Farm Bureau 780 Victory Hwy Unit 8 West Greenwich, RI 02817
www.rifb.org Phone: 401-385-3339 Fax 401-385-3394

Attn: Representative Abney, Chair, House Finance Committee and Committee Members

Testimony in Support of H 7243

April 14, 2026

Relating to Agriculture and Forestry- State Forests and Forestry Projects
Before the House Finance Committee

Rhode Island Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental grassroots organization of farm families united to enhance and strengthen the lives of rural Americans, and to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities. Today our over 1000 members are not only large farmers and small farmers but also those engaged in agricultural industries, teachers of agriculture, and consumers.

The Rhode Island Farm Bureau would like to thank Representative Cotter and the bill's other sponsors for submitting

H 7243.

This is a small, but greatly needed, increase in the number of forestry personnel.

If these new positions were to double the current forestry personnel, it would still only bring their numbers up to less than 25% of the 1962-63 personnel numbers when RI's Division of Forest and Fire Protection was #1 in the country. RI DEM Division of Forestry currently manages significantly more forest land than they did in 1962. We appreciate the addition of "as well as fund their necessary equipment and supplies" to this year's legislation.

Another forest fire in our state has the potential to greatly affect not only our farmers, their crops and property, but property and lives of every citizen of our state. This is a health and safety issue for us all.

I am also the long-time Chair of the RI Forest Fire Advisory Committee, which also supports this legislation.

We ask for your support for **H 7243,**

Henry B. Wright III
President, RI Farm Bureau