



RIEEA

Rhode Island Environmental
Education Association

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On Behalf of the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association

In Support of H-7351 – FOOT PATHS FOR PUBLIC ACCESS

House Judiciary Committee

Thursday, February 5, 2026

The Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) supports **H-7351**, and respectfully urges its passage.

RIEEA stands in strong support of environmental justice across our state, ensuring that every Rhode Islander enjoys access to safe, clean outdoor places to play, work, and learn. Time in nature provides opportunity for physical activity, critical and creative thinking, interaction with and connection to community members, and so much more. Research¹ shows that unstructured play and interaction with the natural world are important for healthy development in children as well as the physical, mental, and social and emotional health of both children and adults. We also know that those of us who have access to outdoor spaces are more likely to be engaged in protecting those spaces and feel less anxiety about the climate crisis and environmental concerns than those who do not have such access.

The RIEEA membership includes over 400 individuals including youth and students as well as 79 organizations² including Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Save The Bay, the Rhode Island Conservation Districts, and Rhode Island College. RIEEA's membership and supporters care deeply about Rhode Island's natural places, our health, and environmental and economic stability.

I encourage you to pass this important legislation, H-7351.

¹ <https://research.childrenandnature.org/>

² <https://www.rieea.org/about-us/organizational-members/>