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February 23, 2026

Chair David Bennett
House Natural Resources & Environment
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for House Bill 7222 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Pesticide Control (Rodent Integrated Pest Management Pilot Programs)

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 7222, which seeks to create rodent Integrated Pest Management (IPM) pilot programs for municipalities. As a statewide coalition representing Rhode Island's 50+ land trusts, we are deeply committed to preserving the integrity of our natural ecosystems and protecting the wildlife that depends on them.

Commonly used rodenticides, particularly Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs), pose a severe and well-documented threat to our local wildlife, water quality, and biodiversity. These toxic chemicals do not stop at controlling rodent populations; they accumulate in the food chain, poisoning non-target species such as raptors, foxes, and domestic pets that consume contaminated rodents. Research has shown that raptors, which play a critical role in naturally managing rodent populations, are especially vulnerable, leading to declines in their populations and disruptions to the balance of our ecosystems.

Rhode Island's land trusts steward thousands of acres of protected land, much of which serves as critical habitat for wildlife. The indiscriminate use of SGARs undermines these conservation efforts by introducing lethal toxins into the environment. Our member land trusts, including the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, have documented evidence of raptors suffering from secondary poisoning, reinforcing the urgent need for safer and more effective pest management strategies.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) provides a science-based, environmentally responsible alternative to the widespread reliance on rodenticides. By combining preventive measures such as habitat modification, exclusion techniques, and the encouragement of natural predators, IPM offers municipalities a sustainable and humane approach to rodent control. We strongly support the pilot programs proposed in House Bill 7222 as a critical first step toward reducing Rhode Island's dependence on SGARs while demonstrating the effectiveness of safer alternatives.

We urge the committee to advance this important legislation to protect our state's wildlife, public health, and environmental integrity. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue, and for considering the Rhode Island Land Trust Council's perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Sayles", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Kate Sayles, Director