



Over 100 Years of Education, Conservation & Advocacy

Audubon Society of Rhode Island

February 25, 2021

Representative Raymond Hull
Chair, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02908

Re: Audubon Society of Rhode Island Supports H5259, Towns and Cities – Enabling Municipal Public Trust Dedication

Dear Chairman Hull and members of the House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing,

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island and our 17,000 members thank Representative Edwards for sponsoring this important legislation. We urge you to pass this bill to the floor for a vote.

Audubon conserves over 10,000 acres of land in Rhode Island, much of the property is open to the public. During the past year while we safely social distance and care for our families by limiting our interactions with other people, open spaces like Audubon's have been treasured by the Rhode Island public. As have other parks and open spaces in cities and towns throughout the state.

While citizens often assume that the open spaces they enjoy are permanently protected, many are not. This bill will give municipalities the authority to dedicate a property as a public trust land to ensure permanent protection.

This is enabling legislation and municipalities can choose whether to use it or not. But it is a useful tool for permanently protecting open spaces valued by local communities.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Meg Kerr
Senior Director of Policy