

Date: March 17, 2026

To: House Committee on Special Legislation

From: Cindy Larson Moura, Barrington, RI – District 67

Cc: Representative Jason Knight, Representative Michelle McGaw

Re: SUPPORT for House Bill 7230 – An Act Relating to Days of Special Observance (RI Native Plant Month)

Chairwoman Alzate and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Special Legislation,

My name is Cindy Larson Moura, and I am a resident of Barrington, RI and the co-owner of Prickly Ed's Cactus Patch Native Plant Emporium – a Rhode Island Small Business focused on promoting ecological landscaping practices rooted in native plants. I am writing today to express my strong support for **House Bill 7230 (McGaw)**, which would designate May as **Rhode Island Native Plant Month** – to be celebrated on an annual basis.

Native plants are a cornerstone of Rhode Island's natural heritage and are essential to the health of our local ecosystems. By formally recognizing their importance, this bill will help:

- **Elevate Attention on Preserving Biodiversity:** Native plants provide critical food and habitat for local wildlife, including essential pollinators and songbirds, both of which are facing significant and concerning declines.
- **Climate Resilience:** Native plants are naturally adapted to our local soils and weather patterns. They require significantly less water, fertilizers, and pesticides, which protects our drinking water and reduces harmful runoff into our local waterways and Narragansett Bay.
- **Economic & Soil Health:** These plants play a crucial role in stabilizing soil, preventing erosion, and mitigating flooding—services that save the state and homeowners significant money in infrastructure and maintenance costs.
- **Promote Environmental Stewardship:** Establishing an annual month of observance provides a vital platform for educators, conservationists, and gardeners to teach the public about sustainable landscaping and the history of our state's flora.

Making May Native Plant Month is a straightforward and effective way to honor Rhode Island's natural environment while highlighting the need to protect it for generations to come. Native plants have been vital to Rhode Island for thousands of years, and their significance won't diminish over time. Establishing this annual observance as permanent eliminates the need for future legislatures to revisit yearly proclamations. It also allows for better planning of activities around the event. For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to approve H7230 so it can move forward to the full House with expediency to allow for meaningful implementation of activities this May!

Thank you for your time and for your service to the state of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Cindy Larson Moura

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