

To: Honorable members of the Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee
From: Jane Donnelly, Barrington, RI
Date: 04/07/26
Re: In support of Senate Bill 2352 – RI Invasive Plant Management Act

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 2352, sponsored by Sen. McKenney and others, which would prohibit the importation, transportation, disbursement, sale or purchase of any terrestrial species of non-native plants deemed invasive by the Department of Environmental Management.

Invasive non-native species, most of which have been introduced by intentional sale and planting, can spread through seed disbursement and other means to unintended locations where they outcompete with native plants. In turn, the loss of native plants negatively affects biodiversity, wildlife habitats, and the resilience of the ecosystem. Invasive plants are difficult to remove and their negative impacts on the ecosystem increase with time. I have lived and gardened in Rhode Island since 1972 and have seen, first-hand, the negative impact of invasive plants on our environment.

Rhode Island is one of only four states in the union and the only state in New England that does not prohibit the sale of invasive plants. It's embarrassing that our beautiful state is so far behind the curve on this initiative. Invasive plants present risks to agriculture, natural ecosystems, and Rhode Island's economic productivity.

I think the likely opponents of SB2352 will be Rhode Island nurseries, but I know many thoughtful gardeners who leave Rhode Island to buy plants in Massachusetts and Connecticut because they want to support businesses that align with their philosophy. Rhode Island nursery owners can look to businesses in the other New England states to learn how to make the shift to selling native plants. They may be surprised to find their customers excited to buy beautiful plants adaptable to the suburban landscape.

I urge you to vote favorably on SB2352.

Copy to Sen Mark McKenney
Sen. Pamela J. Lauria