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Rhode Island Works Best When We Say UNION YES.

April 28, 2026

Chairman Louis P. DiPalma
 Senate Committee on Finance
 Rhode Island State House
 Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H7127- Article 6: Question 5; S3181, and S3231

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

On behalf of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO representing 80,000 union members and 275 affiliated local unions, I write in support of Article 6, Question 5 and Senate Bills 3181 and 3231. Together these proposals will advance a Green Economy and Clean Energy Bond, a Blue Wave Bond for Coastal Preparedness, and increase funding for conservation and open space in the proposed Green Bond.

In Rhode Island, a healthy environment and a strong economy must go hand in hand. We support Article 6, Question 5 which provides funding for Resilient Rhoody Infrastructure, brownfields remediation, energy efficiency, state properties improvements, and the narragansett bay watershed fund. However, there is no funding included for land and water conservation programs, much of which was originally requested by RIDEM. We strongly encourage the general assembly to meet the needs of this agency and protect these programs.

Senate Bill 3231 adds funding for open space conservation, farmland preservation, and outdoor recreation and access projects. Conservation is a good investment in RI, for every \$1 spent on farmland preservation in the state, \$1.70 is provided in federal and philanthropic funding. Conserved lands also protect drinking water, reduce flooding, improve public health, and help mitigate climate change while providing ecosystem services to all Rhode Islanders. Over 46% of residents participate in outdoor recreation, a sector that adds \$1.9 billion to the economy each year and supports 18,000 jobs.

Additionally, we respectfully urge the inclusion of additional funding in the Green Economy Bond proposal for energy efficiency infrastructure. We suggest doing this by increasing the \$10M dedicated to energy efficiency infrastructure to \$20M, and adding parameters for spending, including the advancement of utility-scale thermal energy network pilot projects, distributed energy resources, transportation planning and solar on public schools.

Senate Bill 3181 the Blue Wave Bond for Coastal Preparedness, which supports the implementation of the Resilient Rhoody strategy by funding coastal preparedness and resilient projects. As the Ocean State, with nearly 400 miles of shoreline, Rhode Island has a responsibility to protect its coastal communities and this proposal takes a necessary step in addressing the immediate risks of sea level rise and intensifying storms.

Conservation and critical infrastructure development are mutually beneficial and necessary for a strong, vibrant Rhode Island economy. Rhode Islanders overwhelmingly support these types of investments and for those reasons, I urge your support of Article 6, Question 5 and Senate Bills 3181 and 3231.

Respectfully submitted,

Erica A. Hammond
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