

April 27, 2026

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

I'm writing in opposition to S 2546, which would add 10 logging positions within DEM to support increased logging on our public, state-owned lands, including the potential for clearcutting.

At a time when we're already seeing the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, it doesn't make sense to invest public funds in removing forests that are doing important work for all of us—supporting wildlife, protecting water, and helping buffer climate impacts.

There's a better use of these funds. Rhode Island has been without a Natural Heritage Program since 2007, leaving the state without a clear system to identify and protect rare and endangered species and their habitats. That gap matters. Without this information, decisions about land use can unintentionally cause lasting harm.

Instead of expanding logging, we should be rebuilding the Natural Heritage Program and strengthening our ability to care for the lands we already have.

I urge you *not* to pass S 2546, and to support reinstating the Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program. I implore you to do the right thing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kenda Swartz

Bristol, Rhode Island