



50 Sims Avenue, Space 209  
Providence, RI 02909  
401-212-0832

April 25, 2026

Chair Louis DiPalma  
Senate Finance Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Senate Bill 2820 –**Support for Agricultural Restricted Receipts Account at Department of Environmental Management**

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Committee,

The RI Land Trust Council (the Council) is the state coalition of over 50 land trusts, which are community-based organizations formed to conserve the land and water resources that provide significant benefits to our residents. Many of our member land trusts preserve farmland and work directly with farmers. We are writing in support of Senate Bill 2820, which would establish an agricultural restricted receipt account within the Department of Environmental Management. This account would ensure that the many fees that are collected by the Division of Agriculture are directed back to the Division for use in supporting farmers through programs and services.

The fees collected by the Division of Agriculture generate between \$3.5 and \$4 Million each year. At present, these fees (which are collected from a variety of sources such as commercial fertilizer registrations, nursery worker licenses, soil amendments, deer damage permits, and commercial pesticide applicator licenses) are deposited into the general fund and do not benefit the Division of Agriculture directly. This contrasts with other Divisions in the Department of Environmental Management, such as Division of Forest Environment, which has its own restricted receipt account that allows it to utilize its collected fees for its programs. Given that both Forestry and Agriculture are housed within the same department, it is logical and fair that the Division of Agriculture should have access to its fee revenue as well.

In addition to the restricted receipt account, Senate Bill 2820 will create an advisory committee to assist in determining the most effective and impactful uses for these funds. This committee will ensure that the resources are allocated to advance agricultural efforts in Rhode Island. With the federal funding sources that the Division of Agriculture utilizes facing increasing uncertainty, and with several programs now eliminated or at risk, it is vital that we secure stable and dedicated streams of funding. Without this funding, there is significant concern that many advancements will be lost, putting further strain on our agricultural community and undermining years of progress.

We thank you for leading this effort, Senator DiPalma. This bill will help Rhode Island farmers and ensure the sustainability of our local food system. The Rhode Island Land Trust Council fully supports this bill and urges the committee to pass it.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Sayles", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Kate Sayles, Director, Rhode Island Land Trust Council