



## Audubon Society of Rhode Island

### **RE: Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 3182 – An Act Relating to Agriculture and Forestry - Forestry and Forest Parity Act**

2 June 2026

Maxwell McFarland, Director of Advocacy  
Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island – representing our 17,000 members – I respectfully urge you to oppose Senate Bill 3182.

The Audubon Society of Rhode Island appreciates the intent behind S3182 and agrees that Rhode Island’s forests are critically important for biodiversity, climate resilience, carbon sequestration, clean water, wildlife habitat, and quality of life. We also recognize that working forests and responsible forest management can play a key role in keeping land undeveloped and economically viable.

However, Audubon must oppose S3182 as currently written because the bill provides sweeping exemptions and protections for “forest product operations” without sufficient environmental safeguards, local oversight, or sustainable forestry standards.

Importantly, the bill does not require compliance with forest stewardship plans, climate-smart forestry practices, habitat conservation standards, or DEM best management practices. There are no provisions protecting mature forests, wetlands, riparian buffers, bird nesting habitat, or sensitive wildlife areas. At a time when Rhode Island is increasingly focused on climate resilience and biodiversity protection, legislation affecting forests should strengthen — not weaken — ecological safeguards. Audubon is also concerned about the bill’s broad tax exemptions for forestry machinery, vehicles, and operations without requiring measurable public conservation benefits in return. Public subsidies should be tied to sustainable forest management, long-term conservation outcomes, and ecological protections.

While we support policies that help prevent forest fragmentation and conversion to development, S3182 goes too far in prioritizing commercial forest product operations over responsible environmental stewardship and local planning authority.

Until such protections are included, the Audubon Society of Rhode Island respectfully opposes S3182.

Regards,  
Maxwell McFarland  
Director of Advocacy

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12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield, Rhode Island 02917 • (401) 949-5454 • asri.org