



Trees Are Cool!

March 25, 2021

David Bennett, Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5760 An Act Relating to Agriculture and Forestry

Dear Chairman Bennett,

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Tree Council to express its support for House Bill 5760 ('The Act').

The Act is a pivotal step forward toward the development of a comprehensive strategy for the long term sustainability of Rhode Island's tree and forest resources. These resources represent enormous size, magnitude and wealth. These attributes are all well documented in the recently published The Value of Rhode Island Forests report whose findings helped to form the basis for many of the policy measures cited in The Act.

One of the most profound aspects of H 5760 is that it recognizes Rhode Island is blessed with a forest system composed of two equally important but very distinct forest types. They are our rural forests and our urban and community forests. But while they both provide many economic, ecological and social benefits, each is very different compositionally and structurally from the other. As such, they defy the "one size fits all" management approach which, unfortunately, has derailed many a past effort to maximizing their full potential. The Act, if approved, will help to sort these things out and more.

Finally, today our forest system is at a crossroads. On the one hand, we are blessed that for such a small state nearly 55% of the total land mass is covered by woodlands. Also, 286K acres are classified as urban and community forests forming a virtual green necklace for the close to 85% of Rhode Islanders who reside in our cities and towns. But on the other hand, this remarkable forest system faces huge challenges to its very survival. Cities and towns are environmentally stressed and tree-starved while forest fragmentation remains the biggest threat to our woodlands. Further decline will only come by doing nothing. Alternatively, a lot of good can come from taking one small step in the right direction. The RI Tree Council believes H 5760 is that small step. Thus, we support The Act and respectfully ask The House Committee to support it as well.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doris Alberg".

Doris Alberg, Chairwoman  
John T Campanini, Jr., Technical Advisor