

Peter Trafton MD, Providence, RI  
For the Environment Council of Rhode Island  
Written testimony in favor of 7728, House Environment 4.4.2024

Dear Chair Bennett and Honorable Committee Members,

I write on behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island with strong support for Rep Cotter's 7728, the Comprehensive Fire Safety Act.

The Environment Council is a coalition of environmental organizations and individuals advocating policies and laws that protect and enhance Rhode Island's environment, for more than 50 years. We believe that 7728 will be a valuable addition to the care of Rhode Island's . They are increasingly threatened by wildfires related to the changes produced in our environment by global warming. This is a well-accepted fact and should not be ignored.

Most of Rhode Island's forests are owned privately and are quite small in the tens of acres range. This bill deals with the largest forest properties of our state and requires that such forests have a forest management plan which includes fire prevention and control. The plan must be reviewed by the DEM, the state's lead agency for management of forest fires, and the local fire department.

This bill does not create an onerous burden. Such a plan is a standard aspect of forest management, especially a larger forest. The bill does not say anything about criteria for its being approved by the local fire department and the DEM.

In the future, we hope that requirements for such forest plans, including for wildfires, will be extended throughout the forest regions of Rhode Island.

Thank you very much for considering our request. We hope you will support 7728 and advance its passage.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Trafton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter Trafton, MD