

Testimony in support of H. B. 5099: Construction and Maintenance of State Roads

Dr. Hans Scholl, 71 Fales Avenue, Barrington, RI 02806

Date of Hearing: February 6, 2025

To Chair Bennett and the honorable Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

We are rapidly losing many species of pollinators to extinction, often because of loss of habitat and supportive vegetation.

Pollinators are essential to the reproduction of many plants. Without pollinators, we would not have food!

H. B. 5099 makes a significant contribution by using areas within limits of the 70 DOT-maintained roads and highways—overall a substantial surface area—for growing native and pollinator-friendly trees, shrubs, and plants. In addition to beautification, this will create new habitat for pollinators, helping them to survive, which ultimately helps securing our food supply.

The text of the bill “authorizes” and “empowers”, which does not necessarily create an obligation for the DOT to plant pollinator-friendly plants. I recommend to add a requirement that the DOT reports annually the surface area and locations that were planted with native and pollinator-friendly plants. Ideally, there should be language to state that the intent of the bill is to maximize native and pollinator-friendly plantings.

Since the bill was held and not voted on in 2023 and 2024, I urge you to not lose more time and to bring the bill to a vote on the House floor in 2025. What are we waiting for?

Thank you very much for considering my input, and thank you to Representative McGaw for re-introducing this important bill.



Dr. Hans Scholl

February 3, 2025

71 Fales Avenue
Barrington, RI 02806; (203) 687-6415; clclt17@mac.com