



Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District
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March 31, 2025

Christopher O'Brien
Committee Clerk
401-222-6916
HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: H5076 – Letter of Support for RI Conservation Districts

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter of support is to request approval of funding in the amount of \$180,000 for the conservation districts as requested on page 31 line 29 of document **2025 – H 5076**.

The Conservation Districts were established throughout the US in the late 1930's and early 1940's post dust bowl and exist by statute in RI. There are three districts in RI, encompassing the entire State, Northern, Southern, and Eastern. The Rhode Island State Conservation Committee coordinates with and assists the districts and the work they do with their varied partners. This includes farmers, forest landowners, cities and towns, schools and students.

Impacts of the work done are broad and successful; we write farm and forest management plans, give technical assistance to design and implement innovative management plans, give technical assistance to design and implement innovative practices that enhance farm viability.

As you are aware, there has been significant pressure from drought, flooding and wildfire outbreaks. We work with State and Federal agencies such as RIDEM and USDA to design and implement agriculture practices. Our partners are diverse and represent varied interests. This includes Southside Community Land Trust, RI Food Policy Council, Fab Newport, RI Environmental Education Association, RI Policy Council, Fab Newport, RI Environmental Education Association, RI Infrastructure Bank and others. We develop projects in urban, rural and suburban communities. The projects range from people's garden programs, a seafood 'harvest kitchen', farm to school, Aginnovation and Emergency Watershed Protection-to name a few.

We are focused on those we serve to develop partnerships and write grants to create programs and provide for implementation and continuity. The conservation districts can fill in the gaps for State and Municipal agencies lacking personnel. Through our work, for every \$1 invested in the districts and committee, we can bring in \$82 to RI, which is of significant benefit to our State as a whole.

We do not receive funding from our grants that support operating expenses; this bill would allow us to have sufficient funds to better cover administrative costs that are essential to running our organizations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

sara churgin

Sara Churgin
District Manager, ERICD