



RIEEA

Rhode Island Environmental
Education Association

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On Behalf of the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association

In Support of H-7699 – Rhode Island Housing and Conservation Trust Fund Act

House Committee on Municipal Government & Housing

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

The Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) supports H-7699, and respectfully urges its passage. This bill would address and balance the two essential goals of creating affordable housing for Rhode Islanders, and protecting Rhode Island's important natural areas, such as parks, the shoreline, forests, farms, and more.

RIEEA stands in strong support of environmental justice, ensuring that every Rhode Islander enjoys access to clean, welcoming outdoor places to play, work, and learn. Time in nature provides opportunity for physical activity, critical and creative thinking, interaction with and connection to community members, and so much more. Research¹ shows that unstructured play and interaction with the natural world are important for healthy development in children as well as the physical, mental, and social and emotional health of both children and adults. We also know that those of us who have access to outdoor spaces are more likely to be engaged in protecting those spaces and feel less anxiety about the climate crisis and environmental concerns than those who do not have such access.

The RIEEA membership includes over 350 individuals including youth and students as well as 61 organizations² including Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Save The Bay, the Rhode Island Conservation Districts, and Rhode Island College. RIEEA's

¹ <https://research.childrenandnature.org/>

² <https://www.rieea.org/about-us/organizational-members/>

membership and supporters care deeply about Rhode Island's natural places, our health, and environmental and economic stability.

I encourage you to pass this important legislation.