

**Testimony in support of H5732: Joint Resolution—Green Amendment**

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

Date of Hearing: April 3, 2025

To Chair Shanley and the honorable Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee:

I would like to express my strong support for a “Green Amendment” to our state’s constitution, which would guarantee every Rhode Islander the right to a life-supporting climate and a healthy environment.

Rhode Island has demonstrated leadership in addressing climate change through the 2021 Act on Climate, which mandates net-zero emissions by 2050, and the 2022 legislation requiring 100% renewable electricity by 2033. Enshrining climate and environmental rights in our constitution will provide a robust legal foundation to ensure these ambitious goals are met and maintained, safeguarding our climate and environment for future generations.

I would like to suggest to review and revise the text about environmental preservation, in particular the use of the rather subjective term “scenic” in line 11 (“... and the preservation of the environment’s natural, scenic, and recreational values.”). I don’t think the sponsor means to imply that we never should touch the environment at all (which is, in principle, not possible).

If unchanged, the current text creates a potential conflict by unnecessarily making protecting the environment and the climate mutually exclusive, which they aren’t.

As an example—and as in current practice—while being true to our climate goals we do address the visual impact of offshore wind farms on coastal scenery with a balanced approach that considers both the need for renewable energy and the preservation of natural landscapes, by strategic siting and distance from shore, thoughtful design, stakeholder engagement and collaborative planning and environmental impact assessments. This is a necessary, and a balanced approach, which allows for meeting our climate goals and for protecting the environment and the oceans from dying by overheating and acidification, while still preserving the principal character of the landscape at the same time.

I urge you to approve this amendment, with the suggested revision, and present it to voters in the next election, affirming our state’s ongoing commitment to combating climate change and protecting the health and well-being of all Rhode Islanders.

Please bring the Joint Resolution to a vote in 2025.

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



Dr. Hans Scholl

Apr 2, 2025

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