



Rhode Island 2026 Legislative Session – Biodiversity Bill Lineup

This document presents an overview of significant legislative measures currently under consideration by the Rhode Island General Assembly aimed at protecting the state's biodiversity. The proposed bills address issues such as regulating the sale of invasive plant species and toxic rodenticides, as well as establishing "Native Plant Month." Collectively, these initiatives reflect a concerted effort during this legislative session to restore natural biodiversity, safeguard vital pollinator populations, and protect and enhance human and habitat health across Rhode Island.

This summary was compiled by Cindy Larson Moura, co-owner of [Prickly Ed's Cactus Patch Native Plant Emporium](#). For additions, corrections, questions, or to connect to discuss ways to collaboratively support progress, please reach out! cindy02806@gmail.com.

A summary of current RI House and Senate bills, including their primary sponsors and legislative status as of mid-February 2026 is provided below.

1. Official Rhode Island Native Plant Month Designation

These bills seek to permanently designate May as "Rhode Island Native Plant Month" to raise awareness about the critical ecological, economic, and environmental importance of the state's 1,300+ native plant species. It encourages the restoration of local habitats, supports pollinators and wildlife, and promotes the use of sustainable, indigenous plants in landscaping to improve biodiversity.

- [House Bill 7230](#): Primary Sponsor **Rep. Michelle McGaw (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced January 21, 2026; referred to House Special Legislation Committee.
- [Senate Bill 2327](#): Primary Sponsor **Sen. Susan Sosnowski (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced January 23, 2026; referred to Senate Special Legislation and Veterans Affairs Committee.

2. Invasive Plant Management

The "Rhode Island Invasive Plant Management Act" aims to protect the state's biodiversity, forests, and wetlands by prohibiting the importation, sale, purchase, and distribution of non-native invasive plants. It tasks the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) with managing a prohibited species list to combat the ecological damage caused by invasive species. Rhode Island is the only Northeastern State without such prohibitions currently in place.

- [**House Bill 7071**](#): Primary Sponsor **Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D)**.
 - **Status: Held for further study** by the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee on January 22, 2026.
- [**Senate Bill 2352**](#): Primary Sponsor **Sen. Mark McKenney (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced January 30, 2026; referred to Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee.

3. Roadside Pollinators

These bills would direct the Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to plant native, pollinator-friendly vegetation along state highways and roadsides. The primary purpose is to bolster local biodiversity by creating ecological habitat corridors implementing sustainable, eco-friendly, and ultimately cost saving roadside maintenance practices. These bills are consistent with practices of neighboring states and are supported by programming and available funding though the Federal Highway Administration.

- [**House Bill 7074**](#): Primary Sponsor **Rep. Michelle McGaw (D)**.
 - **Status: Held for further study** by the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee on January 22, 2026.
- [**Senate Bill 2425**](#): Primary Sponsor **Sen. Lammis Vargas (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced January 30, 2026; referred to Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee.

4. Landfill Cover & Pollinator Pilot

This bill restricts artificial turf use at landfills and initiates a native pollinator plant pilot. The objectives of the pilot program include evaluating the practical and environmental benefits of using a plant/grass mix instead of traditional cover materials and creating habitats for pollinators like bees and butterflies. The program would prohibit artificial turf as landfill cover starting July 1,

2026. The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) would be tasked with tracking artificial turf disposal and reporting on the pilot program to the state legislature and the public by January 1, 2028. Expert consultation, potentially including the University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension, will determine the specific plant mix used. The pilot program contributes to broader efforts in Rhode Island to manage waste responsibly, protect the environment, and enhance biodiversity.

- **[House Bill 7736](#)**: Primary Sponsor **Rep. Jennifer Boylan (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced February 12, 2026; referred to House Environment and Natural Resources Committee.
- **Senate Bill #####**: Primary Sponsor **Senator Bridget Valverde**
 - **Status:** Introduced _ 2026; referred to Senate _ Committee.

5. Rodenticide & Pesticide Restrictions

These measures target toxic chemicals to protect biodiversity and public health.

- **[House Bill 7222 \(Rodenticides\)](#)**: Primary Sponsor **Rep. Rebecca Kislak (D)**. Aims to establish municipality-based Rodent Integrated Pest Management (IPM) pilot programs, prioritizing non-chemical methods over toxic pesticides. It restricts the consumer sale of first-generation anticoagulant rodenticides by March 2027 and second-generation by January 2028, with a full ban on usage by January 2029.
 - **Status:** Introduced January 21, 2026; referred to House Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

The following two companion bills aim to strictly regulate the application of pesticides and rodenticides at schools and child care centers and mandate that schools provide copies of notices to parents and guardians regarding these applications.

- **[House Bill 7343 \(School Pesticides\)](#)**: Primary Sponsor **Rep. Lauren Carson (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced January 28, 2026; referred to House Health and Human Services Committee.
- **[Senate Bill 2439 \(School Pesticides\)](#)**: Primary Sponsor **Sen. Lammis Vargas (D)**.
 - **Status:** Introduced February 6, 2026; referred to Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee

Take Action: How to Get Involved

If you would like to support or follow these bills as they move through the 2026 session, here are the most effective ways to do so:

1. Stay Informed with the Official Bill Tracker

The [Rhode Island General Assembly Bill Tracker](#) allows you to receive automatic email alerts whenever a specific bill is scheduled for a hearing or a vote.

- **Sign Up:** Go to the [RI Bill Tracker Registration Page](#) to create a free account.
- **Track a Bill:** Once logged in, enter the bill numbers (e.g., H7071, S2327) into your list.
- **Alerts:** You will get an email notification immediately when there is an update or a hearing posted for your tracked bills.

2. Submit Written Testimony

Written testimony is a critical way to inform committee members of your position. It becomes part of the permanent public record for that bill.

- **Format:** Your testimony must include your **full name**, your **organization** (if any), the **bill number**, and your **viewpoint** (e.g., "In Support" or "In Opposition").
- **Submission (Senate):** For any Senate committee, you can email your testimony directly to slegislation@rilegislature.gov. Always cc your own state senator.
- **Submission (House):** You must email the **clerk of the specific committee** hearing the bill. The clerk's email is always found at the bottom of the [Committee Meeting Agenda](#) once a hearing is scheduled. Always cc your own state representative.
- **Tips:** Submit your testimony in **PDF format** for faster processing and while there is no word or page limit on written testimony, it is always best to keep it clear and concise.

3. Contact Your Representatives

You can also reach out to your local legislators directly to share your views. Find your legislators and learn more about what is happening in the Rhode Island Legislature at www.rilegislature.gov.

To connect with others interested in these issues email cindy02806@gmail.com. To see the latest updates and action alerts visit www.pricklyeds.com/advocating-4-biodiversity

