

2025 -- H 6405

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LC002979
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY -- PROTECTION OF TREES AND
PLANTS GENERALLY

Introduced By: Representatives Handy, Slater, Fogarty, McNamara, Batista, Diaz,
Sanchez, and Bennett

Date Introduced: June 11, 2025

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings.

2 (1) Trees filter pollutants from the air and water, improving air and water quality.

3 (2) Trees provide shade, which helps cool down urban areas and reduce the "urban heat
4 island effect."

5 (3) Trees store carbon, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate
6 change.

7 (4) Trees improve soil water retention, and reduce the risk of flooding by absorbing excess
8 rainfall.

9 (5) Trees can reduce energy costs for cooling buildings by providing shade and reducing
10 the need for air conditioning.

11 (6) Trees also provide social benefits, including public health, wildlife habitat and
12 community wellbeing.

13 SECTION 2. Section 2-15-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 2-15 entitled "Protection of
14 Trees and Plants Generally" is hereby amended to read as follows:

15 **2-15-11. Penalty for violations of §§ 2-15-6, 2-15-8, 2-15-9, and 2-15-10.**

16 (a) Any person, firm or corporation violating the provisions of §§ 2-15-6, 2-15-8, 2-15-9,
17 or 2-15-10, shall be punished by a fine of not less than ~~one hundred dollars (\$100)~~ two hundred
18 dollars (\$200) nor more than ~~five hundred dollars (\$500)~~ one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for each

1 offense.

2 (b) The director of the department of environmental management has the authority to order
3 anyone convicted of violating § 2-15-8 or any governmental entity which the director determines
4 violated § 2-15-8 to plant a replacement tree or trees, the sum of the diameters of which are equal
5 to ~~twice~~ three (3) times that removed or damaged, in the immediate vicinity of the tree removed.

6 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would increase the maximum penalty for certain violations related to the cutting,
2 removal, damage by injurious liquids or gases to trees, plants and shrubs on any public highway or
3 public land under the jurisdiction of state agencies from five hundred dollars (\$500) to one thousand
4 dollars (\$1,000). It would also require that any replacement tree be equal to three (3) times the
5 diameter of the tree that was removed.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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