



Department of Transportation
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March 2, 2021

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chairman
House Committee on Finance
State House, Room 35
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2021- H-5529 RELATING TO HIGHWAYS-Sidewalks

Dear Chairman Abney:

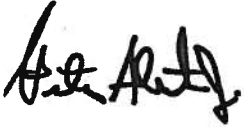
Please accept this written testimony in opposition to House Bill H-5529 which would require all maintenance of state highways to be the responsibility of the state. We are concerned with the significant capital investment that this bill would require of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to properly staff and equip the department to efficiently conduct this function along with statewide plow operations. RIDOT would need considerable additional funding and staffing to accomplish the work proposed in this bill. RIDOT is challenged, at current funding levels, to keep pace with its existing workload during snow storms.

There are 309 state-owned highway overpasses with sidewalks in the state of Rhode Island; there are 11 state-owned pedestrian bridges. At present, the state is not legally obligated nor adequately resourced to assume responsibility of the maintenance of the sidewalks of these structures; this responsibility currently resides with cities and towns, and in many cases, is passed on to neighboring residents and businesses through local ordinance

In summary, for RIDOT to assume responsibility of the maintenance of all sidewalks a significant financial commitment will be required for additional equipment and personnel in each of the RIDOT

maintenance facilities. Beyond the initial capital investment, a commitment to dedicate the funding to cover the annual recurring costs for this operation is also required. For these reasons, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation has many reservations with regards to the passage of this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Alviti, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E.
Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation