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April 7, 2026

House Corporations
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H7872

The Rhode Island Water Works Association (RIWWA) is a professional trade organization that represents water suppliers of the State of Rhode Island. We are writing to express our strong opposition to H 7872, which would establish civil penalties for extended service interruptions by public drinking water suppliers. Public water suppliers in this state take their responsibility to provide safe and reliable water service very seriously. As written, H 7872 will not improve service reliability and will instead impose additional costs on the very customers it is intended to protect.


Most water service interruptions are caused by circumstances outside a utility's reasonable control. These include water main breaks during freezing conditions, emergency responses to contamination risks, precautionary shutdowns directed by the Department of Health, planned outages required for critical infrastructure improvements, contractor damage to water lines, and power outages during severe weather events. H 7872 does not provide exemptions for these common and unavoidable scenarios.

Any civil penalties assessed under this bill would ultimately be borne by ratepayers, increasing water bills for families and businesses across the state without delivering corresponding benefits in reliability or resilience.

Rhode Island already has an established regulatory framework, including oversight, a complaint process, and enforcement authority to address water service issues. These existing mechanisms are effective and appropriate for ensuring accountability.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the committee to oppose passage of H 7872. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this legislation and for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jessica Lynch, P.E.
President

CC RIWWA Executive Board