



April 9, 2024

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St.
Providence RI, 02903

RE: Bill Number: 7999 AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE RHODE ISLAND MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing to express our support for House Bill 7999, which proposes to reallocate the \$5.5 million appropriation from the 2023 budget act to the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program. This initiative, championed by the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, is vital for advancing crucial municipal infrastructure projects across our state.

The decision to transfer these funds from the Municipal Matching Grant Pool program to the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program is both strategic and timely. Despite the establishment and funding of the Municipal Matching Grant Pool last year, the intended purpose has not been fulfilled. The lack of requests for this funding, coupled with the challenges communities face in meeting federal and state requirements, underscores the need for a more effective allocation of resources.

The Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program, on the other hand, has proven to be instrumental in supporting job creation, housing development, and community revitalization projects. By reallocating these funds, we can bolster investments that directly benefit our communities, fostering growth and development in areas identified as key for future expansion and redevelopment.

Our members have directly benefited from the Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program, utilizing funds to undertake critical infrastructure projects that enhance the quality of life for Rhode Island residents. This reallocation of resources will not only stimulate job creation and economic growth but also address pressing needs in housing and community development.

Therefore, we urge your support for House Bill 7999 to help ensure the \$5.5 million appropriation is allocated to eligible municipal infrastructure grant projects. This legislation aligns with our shared goals of advancing sustainable development and improving the well-being of our 39 cities and towns.

Thank you for considering this important matter. Your support for House Bill 7999 will have a lasting and positive impact on Rhode Island's infrastructure and economic future.

On behalf of the League of Cities and Towns, thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David M. Bodah".

David M. Bodah
Associate Director

Cc: House Finance Committee
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel
Ernie Almonte, Executive Director