



May 21, 2025

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

The Hon. Brett P. Smiley
Mayor

Ricky Caruolo
General Manager

Re: H 5317 "An Act Relating to Highways – Relocation of Utility Services"

Dear Chairman Abney:

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The Providence Water Supply Board would like to take this opportunity to comment on H 5317 which examines utility infrastructure relocation reimbursement costs incurred during state-initiated highway projects. Providence Water owns and operates the largest water utility in Rhode Island. We are responsible for supplying affordable, high-quality drinking water to more than 600,000 retail and wholesale consumers throughout the state. Providence Water is responsible for the installation, maintenance, and repair of our infrastructure and the restoration of the surrounding area.

We support legislation H 5317 which would allow municipally owned utilities to be fully reimbursed by the state for the costs associated with the relocation of our infrastructure during federally funded state highway projects. Providence Water is regulated by the Public Utilities Commission and prohibited from making a profit. Currently, there are approximately 40 locations where Providence Water infrastructure crosses an interstate highway. Providence Water has no control over the costs associated with state-initiated projects and no way of estimating costs for budgeting purposes. Incurring these unfunded additional costs may require us to increase rates or suspend work on necessary water infrastructure projects.

Prior to a legislative change in 2022, the total cost of a state highway project was included within the capital costs of the project itself. We believe that this is the best approach to funding and controlling project costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Respectfully,
PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD


Ricky Caruolo, General Manager

MEMBER

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