



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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May 21, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2025 H 5393 - RELATING TO HIGHWAYS –SIDEWALKS

Dear Chairman Abney:

Thank you for the opportunity to allow the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to offer this letter of opposition on H- 5393, AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS – SIDEWALKS. This bill would require that the maintenance of all sidewalks along state highways, with the exception of snow and ice removal, be the responsibility of the state.

RIDOT has performed an additional study of the financial impacts this bill would have if enacted. Preliminary studies in February of 2022 had an estimated additional fund to RIDOT of approximately \$8 million associated with RIDOT assuming the maintenance and repair of all existing sidewalks along state roads and highways, adjusted calculations for 2025 based on a 3% inflation rate was approximately \$8.75M annually.

Additionally, a review of the associated costs for RIDOT to implement a robust sidewalk program, including elements such as curbing, ADA pedestrian ramps, stormwater and drainage repairs or enhancements, plantings and other aesthetic enhancements, as part of the projects included in the STIP, will require an additional \$26 million a year in addition to the \$8 million already budgeted for maintenance of sidewalks.

The Department cannot stress enough the monumental undertaking this would be on RIDOT. The Department has never assumed the tasks associated with this bill, nor do we have the funding or labor to do so. A program of this undertaking will require an entire new section within the current RIDOT Maintenance Division. This new section will be responsible for performing an initial evaluation of the overall health and condition of the existing 600 miles of sidewalk in the state, a consultant to perform this analysis, additional skilled workforce FTE's. Additionally, this bill would require a new section within our Planning Division to take on the task of implementing a new sidewalk program. Without a dedicated and separate funding source for the additional \$34.95 million annually to support these new efforts, the impacts to all future capital projects could be severe, setting the implementation of this program up for failure.

These cost impacts will require an annual review to evaluate labor and materials cost. Without a required, and dedicated revenue stream and additional FTEs for maintenance included in this bill, the passage would require the Department to reduce other projects which are in the RI Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan and compromise the success of the effort.

RIDOT is available to provide any answers or information the Committee may have. Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Alviti, Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E.

Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee
The Honorable Mary Ann Shallcross Smith
Nicole McCarty Esq, Chief Legal Counsel