



May 21, 2025

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

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5393 – AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- SIDEWALKS

Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we are writing to express strong support for House Bill 5393, which would assign responsibility for the inspection, cleaning, maintenance, repairs, and remediation of dangerous and hazardous conditions on sidewalks along state highways to the State of Rhode Island, while leaving snow and ice removal with municipalities.

This legislation marks a crucial step toward improving public safety and ensuring equitable infrastructure maintenance across our state. Currently, local governments are often tasked with maintaining sidewalks that are adjacent to state highways, infrastructure over which they have limited control or ability to influence long-term capital planning. House Bill 5393 appropriately recognizes sidewalk maintenance as a public safety issue of statewide concern, particularly when it comes to high-traffic thoroughfares that serve as key transportation routes.

The League supports this bill for the following reasons:

- **Equity and Consistency:** Assigning sidewalk maintenance to the state ensures uniformity in safety standards and maintenance across Rhode Island. This eliminates disparities in sidewalk conditions that often arise from variations in municipal budgets and resources.
- **Public Safety:** Safe, well-maintained sidewalks are essential for pedestrians, including children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. A statewide approach allows for more consistent and timely identification and remediation of hazardous conditions.
- **Financial Relief for Cities and Towns:** Shifting this responsibility to the state eases the financial and administrative burden on municipalities, freeing up local resources for other essential services and infrastructure improvements.
- **Efficiency and Expertise:** The Rhode Island Department of Transportation is better positioned to coordinate large-scale, efficient sidewalk maintenance along state highways, using their expertise and resources to address issues comprehensively.

House Bill 5393 aligns with broader efforts to improve public infrastructure, support walkable communities, and promote accessibility for all Rhode Islanders. The League commends the sponsors of this legislation for addressing this longstanding concern and urges the General Assembly to advance this important measure.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to strengthening our communities.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Finance Committee