May 21, 2025
RE: Support H5475

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am an organizer with the Providence Streets Coalition as well as a car-free Rhode Islander. PVD Streets is a nonprofit organization that advocates for safer streets, better transportation choices, and policies that advance mobility justice. I am writing in support of Rep. Handy's bill H5475.

For myself, as well as a rapidly growing number of Rhode Islanders, a bicycle is not just a toy or a piece of exercise equipment, but rather my vehicle – along with RIPTA, my bike is how I get to work, school, errands, and social events. Bicycles are also zero emissions vehicles that burn calories instead of fossil fuels. Transportation is our largest and fastest-growing source of carbon emissions, and the State should do everything in its power to encourage cleaner mobility choices. It's imperative if we want to have any chance of meeting the legal mandates in the Act on Climate. It's imperative if we want to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for our children and grandchildren. It's imperative if we want fewer cars on the road, and less traffic on our highways.

While I'm somebody who chooses to ride a bike for transportation, so many people in my community who ride bikes day in and day out do so because they can't afford a car, are too young to drive, or are physically or legally unable to drive. We know that people who rely on bikes are often our most vulnerable citizens, disproportionately low income (Source: League of American Bicyclists). Adding sales tax to one of the simplest vehicles for low income individuals to acquire is just one more financial burden they must bear.

Repealing the 7% sales tax that Rhode Island charges on bicycles – an exemption luxury yachts and private planes sold in Rhode Island already enjoy – would be a small but impactful way to keep the cost of bicycles down both for those who need them, and those who choose them.

Thank you,

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