



## OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

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May 21, 2025

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

### **RE: H 5777 – An Act Relating to Highways – Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority**

Dear Chairperson Abney:

Thank you for providing the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) the opportunity to submit comments in response to House Bill No. 5777. This bill would repeal R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-13.1, the Rhode Island Bridge Replacement, Reconstruction, and Maintenance Fund that authorizes toll facilities on state roads.

The State currently leverages four primary funding sources to finance transportation infrastructure construction and maintenance: Federal funds, state bond proceeds, motor fuel tax revenue, and Rhode Island Capital Plan Funds (RICAP). The Administration has prioritized improvements to the network of roads and bridges by investing resources to fund the 10-year State Transportation Improvement Program.

Further improvements to bring the network to a state of good repair necessitate additional resources. The Governor's recommended budget takes steps to ensure these resources are available by reinstating the RhodeWorks tolling on tractor trailers following a ruling by the First U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that determined the overall tolling system could remain in place. The budget proposal accounts for \$10 million in anticipated revenues from the re-implementation of the RhodeWorks tolling in Fiscal Year 2026.

Even with these additional revenue streams, the Budget Office projects a cumulative shortfall in state matching funds for transportation of approximately \$30 million through Fiscal Year 2030. Repealing the tolling program would increase the shortfall by approximately \$170 million through the same period. Given the importance of these infrastructure improvements and limited funding available, it is critical that the State does not limit its options by eliminating the authority for the RhodeWorks tolling.

Furthermore, OMB has concerns about language in H 5777 that would eliminate transportation audit functions currently housed in OMB's Office of Internal Audit. This unit reviews and approves indirect cost rates for architectural and engineering firms engaged with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) – a requirement for federally funded surface transportation projects. Further, the unit conducts performance audits of RIDOT projects and initiatives, including audits of RIDOT's change order process and Pavement Preservation Program in FY 2024. Audit oversight of RIDOT is essential to encouraging cost-effective operations and compliance with necessary State and federal requirements.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments on this legislation with the Committee. Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian M. Daniels", written in a cursive style.

Brian M. Daniels  
Director, Office of Management and Budget

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance  
The Honorable Robert J. Quattrocchi  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Christopher O'Brien, Committee Clerk