



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES
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April 8, 2026

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

**RE: 2026 H-7256 - AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES
– DEFINITIONS AND GENERAL CODE PROVISIONS**

Dear Chair Abney:

The Division of Motor Vehicles (“DMV”) writes to express concerns with House Bill 7256, An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Definitions and General Code Provisions, and to request an amendment to provide that it shall become effective six (6) months after passage.

The proposed bill would allow any truck with a gross vehicle weight of eight thousand five hundred pounds (8,500 lbs.) or less to be registered as an automobile and issued passenger plates.

The first concern of the DMV is that the proposed bill amends the definition of “automobile” found in R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-1-3(d) to include smaller and medium sized trucks below the prescribed weight threshold. Amending that definition could potentially cause complications in the computation of sales tax amounts which are due when motor vehicle sales transactions include a trade-in vehicle. Under R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-18-30(23), the purchaser of an automobile is allowed a trade-in allowance on an automobile given by the buyer in trade to the seller. The trade-in allowance is deducted from the sales price in determining the amount of the sale subject to the sales tax. This deduction, however, applies strictly to automobiles, and not to trucks. The goal of the proposed bill can be accomplished without altering the definition of “automobile”, with the inclusion of the additional language in the bill that amends R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-1-4(e) to permit trucks below the designated weight limit to be registered with passenger plates.

A secondary concern is the proposed bill’s weight cutoff limit of 8,500 lbs. for passenger plates. A similar bill currently pending in the Senate – S2752 – contains a weight cutoff limit of 8,800 lbs. Administratively, the 8,800 lb. threshold is more practical for the DMV, as that would match the weight limit for most vehicles that

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also qualify for combination registration plates under R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-3-64(a)(1).

Finally, most, if not all, legislative changes and new laws require the DMV to make significant modifications to its computer system's code and operating system, as well as adjust business processes. Providing the DMV with ample time to implement legislatively mandated changes will minimize risks to the system and allow for the successful completion of all development necessary to effectuate the intent of the legislature. As such, the DMV respectfully requests an amendment to the proposed bill that would make the bill effective six (6) months after passage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Walter R. Craddock, Esq.
Administrator

Cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
The Honorable John G. Edwards
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Jane E. Cole, Interim Director, Department of Revenue