



**Grow Smart RI**  
Sustainable Economic Growth  
& Quality of Place

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April 7, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney.  
Chair, House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903  
VIA EMAIL - [HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)

**RE: Support for H-7502 – Maintenance of Sidewalks**

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Grow Smart RI, I'm writing to express strong support for House Bill 7502 (with amendment), which would assign responsibility for maintenance of sidewalks along state highways across Rhode Island.

Grow Smart RI is Rhode Island's statewide smart growth advocacy organization. We represent a big-tent coalition of business and civic leaders, development and finance professionals and engaged grass roots community change agents, all committed to designing and developing /redeveloping our communities in ways that strengthen our Downtowns and Main Streets, expand affordable transportation and housing options, improve access to daily physical activity and protect Rhode Island's beauty, magic and soul.

This legislation is vital to improving public safety and ensuring equitable infrastructure maintenance across our state. House Bill 7502 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 amendment we seek is to require RIDOT to also perform snow/ice removal of sidewalks abutting state-owned roads in urbanized areas.** The current system for ensuring ice/snow from such sidewalks is not working and puts pedestrians and non-motorists of all ages and abilities at risk.

We understand the fiscal constraints of RIDOT's approx. \$1 billion budget. If it is not feasible in the FY2027 budget, perhaps the pending legislative proposal to require a RIDOT Efficiency Study and Performance Audit will yield savings that would enable it to perform this safety function beginning in FY2028.

In the meantime, we recommend the Committee amend the bill to require RIDOT to convene a stakeholder process that includes municipal government, police, Public Works Departments, RIPTA, transit, senior and/or disability advocates, snowplow operators, and vendors of sidewalk clearing equipment, to address this issue and report back to the Assembly by April 1, 2027.

Thank you,

John Flaherty  
Senior Advisor and Special Projects