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March 3, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chair, The Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2025 – H 5658 AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES – PASSING, USE OF LANES, AND OF THE ROAD

Dear Chairman Craven :

Thank you for the opportunity to allow the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to offer this letter of opposition to H 5658, a bill to permit the practice of lane splitting by motorcycles.

Lane Splitting , “ refers to the practice of riding a motorcycle between clearly marked lanes for traffic traveling in the same direction.”.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation opposes Lane Splitting because the practice removes the “safety pocket” for motorcycles encountering stopped traffic. If riding too fast, lane splitting motorcyclists may startle, and/or distract drivers of other vehicles. Additionally, the practice of lane splitting may also lead to driver frustration, who may perceive this practice as “cutting the line”, who may then in turn overreact, and become aggressive.

Most importantly, the Department is concerned with motorcycle safety. Preliminary data shows there were 52 motor vehicle occupant related fatalities in 2024, 8 of those were motorcyclists. RIDOT continues to work towards lowering these numbers, and towards Zero Death policy. The Department will accomplish this through educational and public messaging campaigns. We are concerned that allowing this practice of Lane Splitting, allowing motorcyclists to weave through traffic, could increase crashes and injuries, resulting in death.

Again, for these reasons, I urge you to reject this legislation.

Sincerely,

Peter Alyti Jr., P.E.
Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Jacquelyn M. Baginski
Nicole McCarty Esq., Chief of Legal Counsel