

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.  
Chair, House Municipal Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-5914 – RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- ACTIONS BY AND AGAINST TOWNS

Dear Chairman Craven and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, I write to express our strong support for House Bill 5914, introduced by Representative Felix. This important legislation will provide much-needed protections for municipalities by limiting liability in personal injury claims related to roadway and highway defects and ensuring that subsequent remedial measures (SRM) are not used as evidence against cities and towns.

Currently, municipalities can face liability for remedial actions taken after an incident has occurred, such as repairing a roadway or sidewalk defect. This creates a disincentive for cities and towns to address known hazards promptly, as such actions can be used against them in legal proceedings. House Bill 5914 aligns Rhode Island law with federal rules of evidence by amending Section 45-15-11 to prohibit the use of SRM evidence against municipalities. This change encourages proactive repairs and enhances public safety.

Additionally, the proposed bill amends Section 45-15-12 to reduce the maximum recovery for personal injury claims related to road defects from the current \$100,000 cap to \$3,000. Given the significant financial constraints facing municipalities, this reduction will help control costs while still ensuring a fair resolution for claimants.

House Bill 5914 represents a balanced and necessary reform that supports municipal governance and responsible fiscal management while promoting roadway maintenance without fear of increased liability exposure.

We thank Representative Felix for her leadership on this issue and urge the committee's favorable consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Rossi'.

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House Judiciary Committee