



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

April 29, 2024

Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Chair, House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Room 7A, the State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: *2024 H 7658 An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Size, Weight and Load Limits – Weight Restrictions on Route 114 A East Providence*

Dear Chairman Casey:

The Administration writes in opposition to H 7658, An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles – Size, Weight and Load Limits – Weight Restrictions on Route 114 A East Providence.

This bill would impose restrictions, by weight, on certain commercial vehicles operating on Route 114 A in East Providence between Pawtucket Avenue and the Massachusetts state line. This legislation also imposes a fine for anyone who violates its provisions.

Route 114 A is a state highway. Decisions to restrict or exclude certain vehicles from state highways and bridges on the basis of weight are made by the State Traffic Commission. R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-25-27. In deciding to restrict access to such facilities by weight, the Traffic Commission relies on deficiencies documented by a safety inspection or load rating. Federal law prohibits any state from enacting or enforcing laws denying these commercial vehicles reasonable access to the “national network” of roads of which Route 114 A is a part. 23 C.F.R § 658.19 (Reasonable Access).

The weight restriction on commercial vehicles proposed by this legislation does not come from the Traffic Commission and they do not arise from a public safety study. Indeed, earlier this year, the State Traffic Commission specifically *rejected* a truck exclusion for Route 114 A. The Administration respects the concerns of neighbors who support this legislation. But without using the proper statutory procedure for limiting access to the East Providence portion of Route 114 A and without the support of the Traffic Commission, this measure would likely violate federal reasonable access laws. The Governor vetoed identical legislation in 2023. Since then, the rationale for opposing this bill has only been strengthened.

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Sincerely,



Claire Richards
Executive Counsel

cc: Honorable Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee
Honorable Matthew S. Dawson
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel