

April 29, 2026

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey  
Chair, House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
House Lounge – State House

**Testimony of Miles-Un-Ltd., Inc.  
in Opposition to H8388**

Dear Chairman Casey and Members of the Committee:

I am the owner and President of Miles-Un-Ltd., Inc., a moped rental business that has been operating on Block Island for more than 40 years. I submit this testimony in opposition to H8388, which would amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-19.3-5. **Our position is simple: we support reasonable regulation. We oppose regulation by extinction.**

**I. The Bill Purports to Extinguish an Entire Industry**

H8388 makes two changes that, in combination, are designed to eliminate the moped rental industry on Block Island through attrition. First, proposed subsection (c) imposes a statutory cap of five (5) rental licenses. Second, proposed subsection (d) creates a one-way ratchet: any license that is surrendered, expires without renewal, is revoked, or is “otherwise retired” permanently reduces the cap by one, with no mechanism for recovery. Over time, the permitted number of operators is driven toward zero — without any legislative findings, sunset provision, or periodic review.

**II. The Bill Raises Serious Constitutional Concerns**

Rental licenses on Block Island represent substantial business investments built over decades — fleets of vehicles, storefronts, employees, insurance, and goodwill. These are small businesses that have contributed to Rhode Island’s economy and Block Island tourism for decades. The permanent-reduction provision creates a framework in which an operator’s entire business value can be destroyed by a single missed deadline, administrative technicality, or regulatory dispute, with no possibility of reinstatement and no compensation.

Moped business operators are required under Section 8-83 of the Town of New Shoreham Code of Ordinances to file an application to renew their licenses between November 15 and December 1 every year. Under H8388, if a license holder fails to file an application by December 1, they lose their license, their business, and their livelihood due to administrative technicality. That is an objectively absurd result.

A statute that permanently extinguishes a license upon any lapse — including involuntary revocation or non-renewal for reasons unrelated to operator conduct — raises significant constitutional and practical questions concerning vested property rights and regulatory takings.

### **III. There Is No Justification for Further Regulation**

H8388 is a solution in search of a problem. The bill contains no legislative findings or justifications for extinguishing an entire industry, and for good reason — there is none to be had. The safety concerns that proponents hung their hats on in the past, and most recently during the 2024 legislative session, are not the reality of the industry today. Between Miles-Un-Ltd. and Island Moped, two of five license holders, there was one reportable accident during the 2025 season. One. That is not a public safety crisis. And there is no other purported justification to be had. This is simply an attempt to regulate motor scooters on Block Island out of existence.

That existing framework is not a gap the General Assembly needs to fill. Current law already governs mopeds on Block Island and empowers the New Shoreham Town Council to enact reasonable ordinances governing these rentals, including caps on the number of licenses, hours of operation, fees, inspection requirements, and operator qualifications. If the Town Council believes further regulation is needed — which it is not — it has every tool it needs to adopt an ordinance through the municipal democratic process, with public hearings, notice to affected businesses, and input from residents.

H8388 bypasses that process entirely, substituting a rigid state mandate for local judgment and stripping future town councils of the flexibility needed to respond to changing conditions on the island. Absent any finding of a current problem, and with a working local regulatory structure already in place, there is simply no justification for a statute whose practical effect is extinction. This is precisely the kind of decision that the Home Rule Amendment sought to delegate to the community most directly affected.

### **IV. The Bill Harms Consumers, Employees, and Block Island's Tourism Economy**

As licenses disappear under the ratchet, surviving license holders gain increasing market power. The bill thus creates a statutorily protected pathway to monopoly, followed by the elimination of the industry altogether. The consequences fall on three groups: the visitors and tourists who depend on moped rentals to experience Block Island, the seasonal employees whose jobs disappear with each retired license, and the broader island economy — restaurants, shops, inns, and ferry operators — that depends on tourism. None of these harms have been weighed, let alone justified, by the General Assembly. And my business, one of the small businesses that has operated for over four decades and stands to lose everything, was not even consulted on this proposed change to the state enabling legislation.

### **V. Conclusion**

Miles-Un-Ltd, Inc. has operated under New Shoreham's regulatory framework for decades and is prepared to continue doing so. H8388 contains no findings, no sunset, and no off-ramp and is designed to eliminate a lawful industry full stop. We respectfully urge the Committee to reject H8388.

Dana Hagopian  
Miles-Un-Ltd., Inc.