

May 28, 2026

Honorable Karen Alzate  
Chair, House Committee on Special Legislation  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for House Bill No. 8559 — Rhode Island Manufacturers Association Charity License Plate: An Act Relating to Motor and Other Vehicles — Registration of Vehicles**

Dear Chairwoman Alzate and Members of the House Committee on Special Legislation:  
On behalf of Walco Electric Company, I am writing in strong support of **House Bill No. 8559**, which authorizes the Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles to make available a special charity license plate for the **Rhode Island Manufacturers Association**.

This legislation represents far more than the creation of a specialty plate. It is an opportunity to recognize Rhode Island's extraordinary manufacturing legacy, honor the workers and companies that helped build our state, and support the next generation of manufacturing talent.

Rhode Island is the **birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution** — the place where American manufacturing began. From Slater Mill to today's advanced manufacturing facilities, manufacturing has been woven into the fabric of nearly every Rhode Island family's story. For generations, Rhode Islanders have built careers, businesses, communities, and family legacies through manufacturing. Slater Mill will feature prominently on the final design.

Rhode Island manufacturing is also a part my family's heritage. At a very early age, I was in and out of the many wire, cable and textile manufacturing mills for my family business. Until these manufacturers sadly moved south in the 1960's, they were a part of my life. Manufacturing may have changed since then, but the ingenuity, creativity, craftsmanship and courage has not. We can be proud of those manufacturers in Rhode Island today. They bring the state more than revenue and employment. They bring honor to Rhode Island.

This license plate is not just symbolic — it is deeply connected to Rhode Island's identity, economy, workforce, and future.

Importantly, all proceeds from the sale of the Rhode Island Manufacturers Association charity license plate will benefit the newly created **RIMA Charitable Foundation**. The 501©(3) will support **manufacturing workforce programs, training, technology advancement, innovation, and education across Rhode Island**. These funds will help strengthen pathways into manufacturing careers, support current and future workers, and help ensure Rhode Island manufacturers have access to the skilled talent needed to compete and grow. This plate gives manufacturing the visibility, respect, and recognition it deserves.

We are also entering a historic moment for manufacturing in Rhode Island. As our nation prepares to celebrate **USA 250**, RIMA is highlighting Rhode Island's role in 250 years of American manufacturing leadership — from the earliest days of industrial innovation to the advanced manufacturing companies shaping the future of our economy today.

House Bill No. 8559 provides a meaningful way for Rhode Islanders to show pride in our manufacturing heritage while directly investing in workforce development and training for the future.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support and advance **House Bill No. 8559**.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration.  
Respectfully submitted,



Ellis S. Waldman  
President and CEO  
Walco Electric Company  
Providence and Pawtucket, RI  
401-467-6500  
[ellisw@walcokip.com](mailto:ellisw@walcokip.com)