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Sustainable Economic Growth
& Quality of Place

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March 3, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chair, House Committee on State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903
VIA EMAIL - HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov

RE: Support for H-7984 – Independent Performance and Efficiency Audit of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Dear Chairman Shanley and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Grow Smart RI, I'm writing in support of H-7984.

Grow Smart RI is Rhode Island's statewide smart growth advocacy organization. We represent a big-tent coalition of business and civic leaders, and community stakeholders committed to strengthening and growing Rhode Island's economy in a sustainable and equitable way. We work with many community partners across the state to integrate smart land use, Main Street and Downtown Revitalization as well as transportation and housing policies that use resources most efficiently and that create thriving, healthy and opportunity rich places.

Given a persistent backlog of unfunded state-of-good-repair projects across Rhode Island, and the many unfunded elements of our state's Transit Master Plan and Bicycle Mobility Plan, we believe it makes good sense to ensure that Rhode Island is optimizing RIDOT's investment of more than \$1 billion annually in transportation improvements.

We believe that an independent performance and efficiency audit has strong potential to identify meaningful cost savings to fund additional projects.

We ask that you consider incorporating a series of specific metrics and "peer benchmarking" found in H-7499 and include the following two additional elements, 1.) a provision to include a peer comparison for sidewalk maintenance, including snow and ice removal, and 2.) a provision to compare tools being used by peer DOT's for modeling the emissions impact of proposed or planned transportation projects.

We respectfully urge the Committee to vote in support of this commonsense legislation.

Thank you,

John Flaherty
Senior Advisor and Special Projects