

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley  
Chair, House State Government and Elections Committee

**Testimony of Finnimore & Fisher d/b/a Island Mopeds  
in Opposition to H7789**

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to **H7789**, a bill that attempts to “consolidate” Rhode Island’s micromobility laws but instead creates contradictions, redundancies, and new regulatory conflicts that make the statute less coherent than it is today. I am the owner of Finnimore & Fisher d/b/a Island Mopeds, which holds one of the five licenses for motor scooters on Block Island.

The bill claims that “*current laws... are scattered... causing confusion*” (p. 11), yet it **creates even more confusion** by rewriting long-standing definitions in § 31-1-3 while simultaneously layering new, conflicting rules in the newly added Chapter 19.8. For example, the bill redefines “motor scooter” and “motor-driven cycle” in ways that contradict the licensing exemptions in § 31-10.1-1, even though that section still says motor scooters under 50cc and 30 mph “*shall be exempt from the provisions of this section*” (p. 7). The result is a legal framework where the same vehicle is both exempt from motorcycle licensing and newly required to obtain it.

I respectfully object to any amendment or interpretation of H7789 that would require a motorcycle license for motor scooters under fifty cubic centimeters (50cc) and thirty miles per hour (30 mph). The bill itself defines these vehicles as low-power devices with “*not more than four and nine-tenths horsepower (4.9 hp) . . . and not more than thirty miles per hour (30 mph)*,” a performance range that Rhode Island law has long recognized as distinct from motorcycles. Section 31-10.1-1 continues to state that such motor scooters “*shall be exempt from the provisions of this section*,” meaning exempt from motorcycle licensing. Island Mopeds is required to register and ensure its scooters and removing the requirement for registration of motor scooters would not enhance public safety, rather it would remove accountability for drivers and owners, including the requirement of insurance. Additionally, the DMV now requires an affidavit to register a Motorcycle, Motorized Bicycle, Motorized Tricycle, Mopeds, Motor scooter and Autocycles, again highlighting an inconsistency with current law and practice.

Imposing a motorcycle endorsement on these low-speed, fully automatic scooters is both contradictory and impractical: the motorcycle skills test requires clutch control, gear shifting, counter-steering, and high-speed maneuvers that motor scooters cannot physically perform. Requiring a motorcycle license for vehicles incapable of motorcycle operation would not improve safety, would eliminate seasonal mobility, and would allow riders to obtain a motorcycle endorsement by testing on a scooter—undermining the very safety standards the licensing system is meant to protect. For these reasons, the proposed reclassification is unsound, unenforceable, and contrary to established Rhode Island law.

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Page 2 of 2

As another example of increased confusion that could arise if this bill is passed, it adds a “Class 4” e-bike category and declares it a recreational vehicle (p. 8), even though these devices are already regulated under existing recreational vehicle statutes. This creates overlapping and inconsistent regulatory regimes for the same equipment.

In short, H7789 does not simplify Rhode Island law—it **multiplies contradictions**, forces DMV to enforce mutually incompatible definitions, and exposes ordinary residents to unclear and inconsistent rules. A bill that claims to “centralize and clarify” should not create more confusion than it resolves.

I respectfully submit that any new legislation seeking to clarify Rhode Island’s vehicle laws should adopt a single, uniform rule: **any motorized device operated on a public road must be treated as a motor vehicle for purposes of licensing, registration, and insurance, with the sole exemption being medical mobility devices such as wheelchairs.**

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to reject H7789 in its current form.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "MJ FINNIMORE". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Michael Finnimore, President  
Finnimore & Fisher d/b/a Island Mopeds