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State Government Affairs



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The Honorable Robert Britto  
Chairman, Senate Commerce Committee  
Rhode Island State House, Room 212  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Verizon Opposition to S2767 – Rhode Island Utility Fair Share Roadway Repair Act**

Dear Chairman Britto and Members of the Committee:

Verizon appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2767. While we understand and share the goal of minimizing disruption to Rhode Island residents and businesses during essential infrastructure work, S2767 as drafted imposes an unworkable administrative burden that will inevitably delay critical utility repairs and increase the cost of maintaining the state's communications networks.

**A primary concern for Verizon is that the requirement to notify every property owner within a 1,000-foot radius of a work site is fundamentally disproportionate to the impact of the work.** To provide context on the nature of our operations, Verizon's work involves both sidewalk and roadway projects in roughly the same frequency. Much of this work involves accessing existing infrastructure beneath the street via manholes or conduits. When roadway access is necessary, these projects are typically short-duration tasks—often lasting less than 48 hours—that involve essential maintenance, repairs, or upgrades. In the vast majority of these instances, the "closure" is limited to the temporary occupation of a single lane of traffic, with vehicles safely diverted around a very limited work zone. Our work runs are generally short, averaging approximately 500 feet and rarely exceeding 1,000 feet in total length.

Given this operational reality, a 1,000-foot radius in an urban environment like Providence can encompass dozens of city blocks and thousands of individual residents and businesses. For a routine repair that only occupies one lane for a few hours, the administrative cost of identifying and delivering notices to such a vast area would often exceed the cost of the repair itself. This requirement would also create a "notice-heavy" environment where residents are flooded with warnings for minor work, leading to "notification fatigue" and undermining the effectiveness of notices for truly major projects.

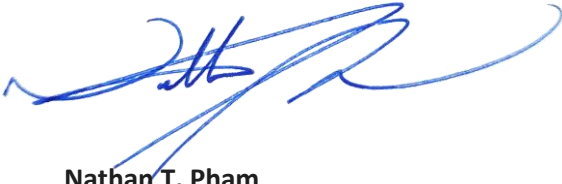
**Furthermore, the bill's mandate for a 48-hour notice period contains no exception for emergency repairs.** In the event of a fiber optic cut, a downed utility pole, or a wireless site failure, Verizon's priority is the immediate restoration of service—especially for E-911 and other emergency services. Requiring a 48-hour waiting period for these "road closures" would directly conflict with our duty to maintain a resilient and responsive network, potentially endangering public safety during critical outages.

Verizon remains committed to being a good neighbor and coordinating closely with the communities we serve. However, the rigid and overbroad requirements of S2767 will hinder our ability to deploy and repair infrastructure efficiently across the state. We respectfully urge the Committee not to pass S2767 in its

current form and remain available to meet with members to answer questions or discuss more balanced alternatives.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nathan T. Pham', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

**Nathan T. Pham**

Verizon, State Government Affairs

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