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The Honorable V. Susan Sosnowski
Chairperson, Senate Committee on Environment and Agriculture
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: S2798 – An Act Relating to Property – Rhode Island Coordinate System

Dear Chair Sosnowski:

I am writing as chair of the Board of Registration for Professional Land Surveyors in support of S2798. The Board worked with Department of Business Regulation staff and consulted with a RIDOT staff surveyor to review the model federal legislation and propose amendments to the current Act.

This legislation adopts the modernized state plane coordinate system expected to be released by the federal National Geodetic Survey (NGS) later this year. NGS has been routinely updating and adjusting the coordinate system since its adoption in 1927, however, this is the first time since 1983 that the NGS has recommended that all states update legislation to reference a modernized coordinate system. This bill updates the Act to reference a newer version of the data, clarifies existing content, defines the prior systems as the legacy systems, and establishes the international foot as the measurement standard under the new system. The modernized state plane coordinate system: improves vertical and horizontal accuracy; is responsive and adaptable to significant geological events; and will be easier to maintain and update.

Adopting this updated federal coordinate system benefits RI in multiple ways. First, it will ensure that RI is eligible to receive future federal highway funding because we are working with the most current federal coordinate system. Second, it enables RI land surveyors, engineers and GIS professionals to have access to the most updated data for mapping, boundary surveys, flood plain measurements, and other key infrastructure projects. Finally, it ensures national and regional consistency so that RI is using the same coordinate system as its neighboring states (VT and CT have already adopted the new system; and MA, ME and NH are working on legislation).

Furthermore, the adoption of this Act will not affect or infringe on any real property rights, regardless of ownership, within the State of Rhode Island.

For these reasons, I and the entire Board respectfully urge the committee to support S2798. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Michael J McCormick

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