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A Public Agency

BRISTOL COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

May 7, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
State House
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02903
Email: SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov

RE: Senate Bill S 2105: Revisions to RIGL 24-8.1-2
"Relocation of Utility Facilities necessitated by Highway Construction"

Honorable Chairman DiPalma and Committee Members:

My name is Stephen Coutu, and I am the Executive Director and Chief Engineer of the Bristol County Water Authority (BCWA) which provides drinking water to the residents and businesses for the Towns of Barrington, Warren, and Bristol. **The BCWA supports the proposed amendments to RIGL 24-8.1-2, "Relocation of Utility Facilities necessitated by Highway Construction"**. As currently constituted, RIGL 24-8.1-2, places an unfair and unwarranted burden on municipal and quasi-municipal public utilities that provide water and sewer service to its residents without regard for availability of funding, as well as probable conflicts with a utilities' capital improvement plan and/or current construction plans. The costs associated with the relocation of a municipal water or sewer infrastructure as part of a state-initiated highway or roadway project should not be placed on the ratepayers of the affected utility. Public water suppliers are already struggling with the high costs to deliver a safe and reliable water supply. The current legislation exposes public water suppliers, like BCWA, to unexpected and unwarranted expenses which would be passed on to its ratepayers.

For the reasons noted above, the BCWA supports the amendments to RIGL 24-8.1-2 as proposed by Senate Bill S 2105.

Thank you for your consideration,

Stephen H. Coutu, P.E.
Executive Director and Chief Engineer