



RHODE ISLAND TRUCKING ASSOCIATION, INC.

831 BALD HILL ROAD
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April 2, 2026

Honorable Louis DiPalma
Chairman
Rhode Island Senate Finance Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: Senate Bill 2541 - **SUPPORT**

Chairman DiPalma and Committee Members:

In 2015, a transient bureaucrat by the name of Peter Garino conceived Rhode Island's truck-only tolling program while conducting a Google search over a family dinner. Though Garino's tenure with RIDOT was short-lived, his seemingly benign actions fueled one of our state's most contentious battles – one focused on how best fund our infrastructure. Today, over ten years later, that program, originally intended to capture revenue from tractor-trailers passing through the state, has backfired and morphed into a self-inflicted wound upon our own business community and consumer.

I submit the following points in support of that position:

- Plan Backfired: The Louis Berger study, an 'investment-grade tolling study' commissioned by RIDOT in 2015, showed that only 5.7% of truck traffic on our interstates was through, external-external passage with no destination or delivery purpose in Rhode Island. The 94.3% balance of truck traffic categorized as either internal-internal, internal-external, and external-internal has a direct link to and burden upon our supply chain costs.
- Promise Broken: The First Circuit's 2024 partial overturn of Judge William Smith's ruling eliminated the protective caps which were put in the final 2016 legislation to insulate Rhode Island truck operators from repeated, unsustainable toll costs. By continuing the program without caps, the state will not only defy a promise and covenant made within these walls and to our state's business community, but will also pave the way to unsustainable tolls that will cripple some businesses while forcing others to impose steep delivery surcharges upon consumers.



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- Hypocrisy Proves a Point: H-8181 is currently under consideration and seeks to carve out and exempt waste haulers from tolls. This sector operates trucks under a RIDOT-issued annual overweight permits at a weight of 104,800 lbs. which is roughly 12 tons over FHWA's legal maximum of 80,000lbs. They would be among the most impacted due to repeated trips within the state which, under a capped program, would accrue to no more than \$40 per truck per day, but uncapped, would often surpass \$200 per day. The hypocrisy of this legislation which attempts to cherry pick who pays tolls should be noted, but it also serves to illustrate the acute and real impacts upon affected local businesses who are now seeking relief from unsustainable toll costs.

On behalf of RITA's 500 members – primarily Rhode Island small business owners who operate and depend upon commercial vehicles - I conclude by thanking Senator Morgan for bringing this bill forward as an impetus for critical discussion. My simple request of this committee and all elected leaders is to exercise necessary due diligence upon the current truck tolling program prior to its reinstatement. I take no solace in the fact that truck-tolls are no longer just our industry's problem, but **Rhode Island's problem.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher J. Maxwell".

Christopher J. Maxwell
President & CEO
Rhode Island Trucking Association, Inc.



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