



Department of Transportation
Two Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02903

Office 401-222-2450
Fax 401-222-3905
www.dot.ri.gov

March 12 , 2026

The Honorable Jacob Bissaillon
Chair, Senate Committee on Housing and Municipal Government
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2026 - S 2425 - RELATING TO HIGHWAYS CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE ROADS

Dear Chairman, Bissaillon :

Thank you for the opportunity to allow the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to offer this letter of concern on S- 2425, AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHWAYS – CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE ROADS. This bill “Authorizes and empower the department of transportation to plant pollinator friendly native species of trees, shrubs, grasses and plants within limits of a roadway, including state highways.”

This bill empowers the Department to plant pollinator friendly vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, and otherwise beautify the area within the limits of the state roadways, and highways when deemed advisable. The use of the language “shall” in the bill, as it currently reads, requires RIDOT to build this associated cost into the project, impacting the overall time to execute the project as well as the associated costs. The Department would prefer the language to reflect our position to have the option, or choice to implement pollinator plantings, when advisable and or appropriate.

We respectfully request that on line 6 and line 12 the word “shall” be edited to ready “may”. This language will reflect the current language in the RIGL 24-8-11 Beautification. *“ It is stated the department of transportation is hereby authorized and empowered to plant trees, shrubs and otherwise beautify the area within the limits of a road in a manner and location as the department may deem advisable.”*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information and for your diligence in reviewing these pieces of legislation. Please let me know if any further information is needed.

Sincerely,

Robert Rocchio, P.E.
Interim Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

cc: The Honorable members of the Senate Housing and Municipal Government Committee
The Honorable Lamis J. Vargas
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff