

Rhode Island Department of Transportation



RhodeWorks

Letters of Support

Rhode Island Consulting Engineers (RICE) to Rhode Island House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello – September 16, 2015

Rhode Island Consulting Engineers (RICE) to Rhode Island Senate President M. Teresa Paiva Weed – September 16, 2015

Rhode Island Consulting Engineers (RICE) to Governor Gina Raimondo – September 16, 2015

Coalition for Transportation Choices (CTC) to Rhode Island House Committee on Finance – July 24, 2015

Building America's Future to Rhode Island House Committee on Finance – June 22, 2015

Grow Smart RI to Rhode Island House Committee on Finance – June 22, 2015

September 16, 2015

The Honorable Nicholas A. Mattiello
Speaker of the House
House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: RhodeWorks Program

Dear Speaker Mattiello:

I am writing this letter to notify you that the Rhode Island Consulting Engineers (RICE), a professional association representing the vast majority of engineering firms doing business in Rhode Island, has endorsed your **RhodeWorks** program. We applaud your effort to create sustainable transportation infrastructure funding. There are several reasons why RICE has endorsed this program that include the following:

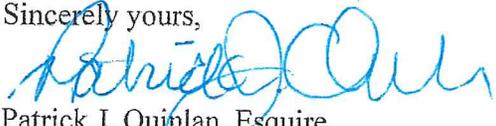
- It will add to the safety of our citizens by having deficient bridges repaired or replaced.
- The Plan will spur economic development
- It will entice prospective companies considering coming to Rhode Island that may be dissuaded if they were to view our bridges being held up by wooden blocks.
- RhodeWorks will create both engineering jobs and construction jobs.
- Without approval of this bill much of our existing engineering talent will be lost to other surrounding States due to lack of work and much of our up and coming talent graduating from our State universities will bring their talents out-of-state.

RICE is very interested in keeping good, quality highway and bridge design engineering jobs here in Rhode Island. Many of our member firms are headquartered in Rhode Island and are feeling the economic impact of the lack of sustainable funding of our roads and bridges.

RICE is in agreement that the RhodeWorks plan is a fair system of apportioning costs to ensure that those vehicles that do the most damages to our bridges and highways pay their fair share of the cost of keeping them in good repair. We particularly applaud the adjustments made to the bill in the final days of the General Assembly session to help mitigate the impact of the tolling plan on local businesses. We stand ready to assist you and the Governor and the Senate President to move this bill forward as quickly as possible hopefully during this fall prior to the beginning of the next legislative session.

The Rhode Island Consulting Engineers wholeheartedly and unequivocally endorses the RhodeWorks program to preserve our infrastructure as well as to make Rhode Island a better place to live and work.

Sincerely yours,


Patrick J. Quinlan, Esquire
Executive Director

Rhode Island Consulting Engineers
400 Smith Street - Providence, RI 02908

September 16, 2015

The Honorable M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President of the Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: RhodeWorks Program

Dear Senate President Paiva Weed:

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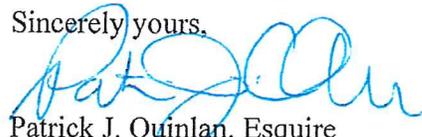
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Sincerely yours,



Patrick J. Quinlan, Esquire
Executive Director

Rhode Island Consulting Engineers
400 Smith Street - Providence, RI 02908

RICE

September 16, 2015

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Governor
State of Rhode Island
Statehouse
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: RhodeWorks Program

Dear Governor Raimondo:

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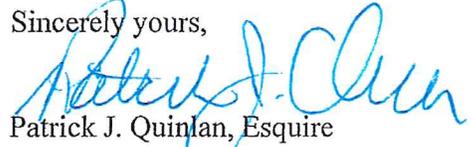
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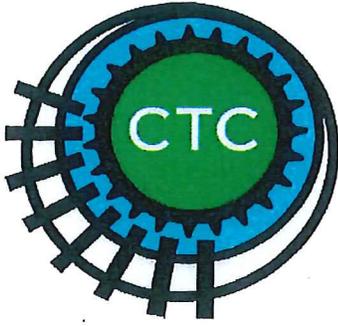
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Sincerely yours,



Patrick J. Quinlan, Esquire
Executive Director

Rhode Island Consulting Engineers
400 Smith Street - Providence, RI 02908



COALITION FOR TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

CTC statement in support of (S-997) authorizing RIDOT to collect user fees from large commercial trucks traveling on Rhode Island bridges to fund sorely needed transportation infrastructure improvements

AARP

Amalgamated Transit Union
American Lung Association in RI
Apelron Institute for Sustainable Living
Aquidneck Island Planning Commission
Audubon Society of RI
Bike Newport
Blackstone Valley Partnership
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Blueways Alliance
Brown emPower
Childhood Lead Action Project
City-State, the Urban Design Lab at RISD
Clean Water Action
Conservation Law Foundation
Cornish Associates
DOT Watch
East Coast Greenway Alliance
Ecolect
Environment Council of RI
Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island
Farm Fresh RI
Goodwill Industries of RI
Grow Smart Rhode Island
Head of the Bay Gateway
LISC-RI
Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Operating Engineers, Local 57
Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.
Pawtucket Foundation
Providence Foundation
Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau
Recycle-a-Bike
RI Association of Railroad Passengers
RI Bicycle Coalition
RICOSH
RI Consulting Engineers
RI Interfaith Power & Light
RI Land Trust Council
RIPTA Riders Group
RI Rehabilitation Council
Transportation Consortium
RI Student Climate Coalition
Save The Bay
SEIU, District 1199
Sierra Club
The Providential Gardener
U.S. Open Cycling
Youth In Action

235 Promenade Street #550
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 273-5711 x5

July 24, 2015 - The Rhode Island Coalition for Transportation Choices (CTC) is a coalition of 49 member organizations representing business, labor, environment, public health, senior and youth organizations. CTC advocates for responsible public investment in a 21st century transportation system that enhances our economy, safeguards the environment and provides Rhode Islanders with healthy and affordable transportation choices.

That's why CTC encourages the Rhode Island House of Representatives to convene in a special fall session and pass Senate Bill 997 – a bold initiative to raise significant new resources to support long-overdue investments in our state's critical transportation infrastructure, including mass transit. We believe the proposal to collect user fees from heavy trucks is fair and equitable based on the extensive wear and tear that heavy trucks impose on the state's road and bridge system.

We believe that user fees for transportation infrastructure investments are consistent with existing policy in several nearby states and would not represent a competitive disadvantage for Rhode Island, but actually instead provide a short and long term boost to the Rhode Island economy. It is well-documented that public investments in mass transit benefit the entire economy.

CTC is hopeful that the Raimondo Administration will take a holistic approach to transportation by including sorely needed investments in our state's bike/ped infrastructure and mass transit system. In addition to consideration being given to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as part of restructuring the failing 6/10 Connector, we understand that the proposed RhodeWorks plan includes a line item of \$80M for transit investments still to be determined, as well as a line item of \$128M for bicycle and ADA infrastructure to be determined, which could be used to advance "complete streets" (multi-modal) design elements when roadways are being repaired and/or reconstructed. We're especially pleased that these investments are "to be determined" because we believe strongly in the principle of thoughtful and long-range planning as well as public participation in decisions about how best to invest limited resources for maximum return and community benefit.

July 24, 2015
Page Two

We appreciate and support the following amendments included in Senate Bill 997:

1. The addition of four (4) provisions of relief to Rhode Island based operators of trucks that would be subject to tolls (property tax rebate, tax credit for vehicle registration fees, motor fuel tax rebate program and economic development benefits for those that operate at T.F. Green Airport or Quonset Business Park).
2. The new stipulation that tolls shall be fixed only after conducting a cost/benefit analysis and providing an opportunity for public comment.
3. The new stipulation limiting the assessment of tolls to once per toll facility per day in each direction and a total maximum amount for crossing the state along Route 95.

CTC looks forward to contributing its policy and communications expertise to ensure that this transportation proposal realizes its tremendous potential to achieve sustained economic growth in Rhode Island.

Respectfully,



Jerry Elmer
Co-Chair
CTC



John Flaherty
Co-Chair
CTC

6501



Co-Chairs

*Michael R. Bloomberg, Former Mayor, New York City
Ray LaHood, Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation
Edmund G. Rendell, Former Governor, Pennsylvania
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Founding Co-Chair & Ex-Officio Member*

June 22, 2015

Hon. Raymond Gallison
Chairman
House Committee on Finance
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Mr. Chairman,

As the two-term mayor of Philadelphia, and the two-term governor of Pennsylvania, I'm keenly aware of the challenges cities and states face in rebuilding our roads and bridges. During my time as governor we invested in repairing our bridges and reduced the number of structurally deficient ones from 6,660 to 4,480. But I write today as co-chairman of Building America's future, which is a nonprofit, whose sole goal is the revitalization of America's infrastructure.

In 2008, during my second term as governor, two contractors from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation stopped to get a sausage sandwich; they parked their cars under a bridge along I-95 in Philadelphia.

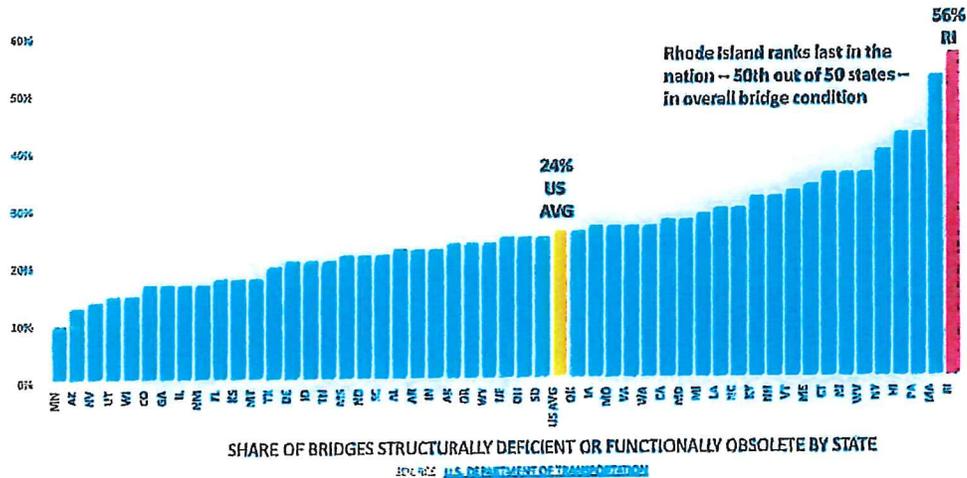
It's lucky they wanted that sausage sandwich because they saw one of these piers with an eight foot gash in it about five inches wide. The contractors knew right then that the bridge was in deep trouble.

The section of I-95 was immediately shut down and blocked off while construction crews buttressed the column with steel girders. It was closed for three days, creating havoc in Philadelphia.

But the city was lucky: if those contractors hadn't stopped for that sausage sandwich, there's a strong likelihood that bridge would have collapsed. You can't help but think of the I-35 bridge that collapse in Minnesota in 2007, killing 13 people and injuring many more.

America is suffering from dilapidated and crumbling infrastructure across the country. But few states have issues as serious as Rhode Island. In a recent study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Rhode Island ranked 45th in road quality, and dead last—50th out of 50th states—in bridge quality.

RHODE ISLAND HAS THE WORST BRIDGES OF ANY STATE IN THE NATION



The problem is simple: we are not investing enough resources to maintain, rebuild, and modernize our infrastructure. The problem isn't going to fix itself; in fact, the longer we wait, the more expensive it will become to address it. We need our elected officials to step up and offer solutions. We need leadership.

That's why I'm so impressed with Governor Raimondo's RhodeWorks proposal. Here's a new governor who identified the problem, analyzed it, and offered a bold solution to address it. Her proposal would invest approximately a billion dollars in additional money over the next ten years to modernize Rhode Island's highway bridges. It would generate much of the money by assessing a user fee on large commercial trucks.

Her plan makes sense for several reasons. First, virtually every state on the I-95 corridor from Maryland to Maine assesses user fees on large commercial trucks. Why should Rhode Island continue to be an outlier? Especially since its roads and bridges are among the worst?

Second, study after study shows that large commercial trucks are responsible for the vast majority of vehicle-created damage to roads and bridges, yet commercial trucks pay only a fraction of the costs to repair them. It's only fair to ask them to do a little more -- especially since they're already paying these fees in so many other states.

Third, her plan will create jobs. Rhode Island's unemployment rate is still among the worst in the country, and the state has suffered especially with construction jobs. The Governor's plan will not only improve roads and bridges, but it will create thousands of jobs and provide a strong boost to the state's economy.

And finally, it's good for business. One of the key things companies look at deciding where to locate is the quality of infrastructure. If Rhode Island wants to attract more companies to invest and create jobs, it has to improve the quality of its infrastructure.

It's no surprise that some in the trucking industry are complaining. Truckers claim to want to rebuild our roads, but their solution is to hike the gas tax or to impose tolls on everyone. Governor Raimondo's plan makes sense: trucks cause a majority of the damage, it's only fair if they pay a little more of the costs of repair.

Here's the bottom line:

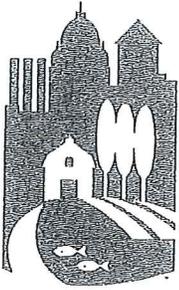
1. Rhode Island HAS to invest in rebuilding its roads and bridges. This isn't a luxury...it's a necessity.
2. The longer you wait, the more expensive it will become because materials become more expensive and more and more bridges fall into disrepair.
3. Somebody has to pay -- why shouldn't it be the large commercial trucks? They're causing a majority of the vehicle-caused damage, and they're paying these fees in so many other states (including \$114 to cross the George Washington Bridge in New York)?

America needs leadership to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure. Your governor is providing that leadership right here in Rhode Island. You have a chance to make real progress, address a serious problem, and put thousands of people to work. I hope you act without delay.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Edward G. Rendell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Edward G. Rendell



GrowSmartRI
Sustainable Economic Growth
& Quality of Place

Howard M. Kilguss
Chairman of the Board
Scott Wolf
Executive Director

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Grow Smart RI statement in support of (H-6321) authorizing RIDOT to collect user fees from large commercial trucks traveling on Rhode Island bridges to fund sorely needed transportation infrastructure improvements

June 22, 2015 - Grow Smart Rhode Island ("Grow Smart") is a statewide nonprofit policy research and advocacy organization focused on promoting enduring and sustainable economic growth that capitalizes on Rhode Island's many place-based assets. One of the principal ways we pursue this is by promoting responsible public investment in a 21st century transportation system that enhances our economy, safeguards the environment and provides Rhode Islanders with healthy and affordable transportation choices.

That's why Grow Smart supports House Bill 6321 – a bold initiative to raise significant new resources to support long-overdue investments in our state's critical transportation infrastructure, including mass transit. We believe the proposal to collect user fees from heavy trucks is fair and equitable based on the extensive wear and tear that heavy trucks impose on the state's road and bridge system. We also commend Senate leadership and the Administration for proposing amendments that provide a measure of relief to Rhode Island based trucking companies.

We believe that user fees for transportation infrastructure investments are consistent with existing policy in several nearby states and would not represent a competitive disadvantage for Rhode Island, but actually instead provide a short and long term boost to the Rhode Island economy.

Grow Smart commends the Raimondo Administration for taking a holistic approach to transportation by including sorely needed investments in our state's bike/ped infrastructure and mass transit system. In addition to a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project to be considered as part of reconstructing the failing 6/10 Connector, we understand that the proposed RhodeWorks plan, now under development, includes a line item of \$80M for transit investments still to be determined. We're especially pleased that these investments are "to be determined" because we believe strongly in the principle of thoughtful and long-range planning as well as public participation in decisions about how best to invest limited resources for maximum return and community benefit.

We appreciate and support the following amendments included in House Bill 6321:

1. The addition of four (4) provisions of relief to Rhode Island based operators of trucks that would be subject to tolls (property tax rebate, tax credit for vehicle registration fees, motor fuel tax rebate

program and economic development benefits for those that operate at T.F. Green Airport or Quonset Business Park).

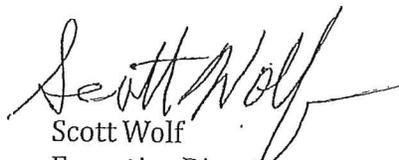
2. The new stipulation that tolls shall be fixed only after conducting a cost/benefit analysis and providing an opportunity for public comment.
3. The new stipulation limiting the assessment of tolls to once per toll facility per day in each direction and a total maximum amount for crossing the state along Route 95.

So, how could the Administration's proposal be further strengthened? We offer the following recommendations.

1. To ensure that transportation projects are carefully vetted and aligned with long-range transportation and land use planning, consider adding language to p. 15 (42-13-8.14. Conformance to statute, rules, and regulations) reinforcing that the forthcoming RhodeWorks action plan will align with Transportation 2030 and RIPTA's 5-Year Strategic Plan and periodic updates to same.
2. Finally, we recommend that the forthcoming RhodeWorks action plan acknowledge, prioritize and integrate the Transit Hubs initiative which was approved by 60% of voters in the November 2014 election.

Grow Smart looks forward to contributing its policy and communications expertise to ensure that this transportation proposal realizes its tremendous potential to achieve sustained economic growth in Rhode Island.

Respectfully,


Scott Wolf
Executive Director
Grow Smart RI


John Flaherty
Deputy Director
Grow Smart RI