

**Testimony in support of House Bill 5099, House Environment Committee February 6, 2025 by Peter Trafton, Providence Rhode Island**

Dear Chair Bennett and Honorable members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

**I write with strong support for Representative McGaw's 5099, which amends Chapter 24 – 8 entitled “Construction and Maintenance of State Roads”, to include planting of pollinator-friendly native species, paid for from highway construction and maintenance funds.**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, at least, that this bill has been presented to the General Assembly. It has at least twice been held for further study. The director of our Department of Transportation has twice requested modification of the text so that he would not be required to carry out the intent of the bill.

As pointed out by reporter Landeck in the Providence Journal on May 12, 2023, growing pollinator- friendly native plants will help Rhode Island support the survival and growth of our pollinator insects, primarily various species of bees. Without them, our plants will not survive.

My wife and I have lived in Rhode Island since 1984. During this time, we have noticed that it has become extremely unusual to notice any insects striking our windshield during the warmer months when they used to be abundant. We need those insects for our plants to survive. We need the plants to keep our environment whole. They are vital for the state's essential biodiversity.

Planting Rhode Island native pollinator-friendly plants and allowing them to grow through a full cycle would mean that roadside mowing could be reduced to once a year, thus saving significant DOT funds.

Please help Rhode Island restore its pollinators and its plants. This is the year to move this bill ahead and pass it.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PG Trafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Peter Trafton