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February 6, 2025

The Honorable David A. Bennett
Chairman
House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2025 H 5099, RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE ROADS

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for the opportunity to allow the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to respectfully submit this letter of concern regarding H 5099.

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,

Peter Alviti, Jr., P.E.
Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
The Honorable Michelle E. McGaw
Nicole McCarty Esq. Chief Legal Counsel