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February 3, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chair, The Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2025 – H 5183 AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES – PASSING, USE OF LANES, AND OF THE ROAD

Dear Chairmen Craven :

Thank you for the opportunity to allow the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to offer this letter of opposition to H 5183, a bill to permit the practice of lane filtering by motorcycles.

Lane Filtering as defined is, "moving between traffic, when other surrounding traffic is stationary." In other words, "Lane filtering" refers to the practice of riding a motorcycle between stopped motor vehicles to the front of the pack, typically at a signalized intersection. "Lane splitting", legislation, which has been previously introduced in years past, refers to the practice of riding a motorcycle between clearly marked lanes for traffic traveling in the same direction.

Although Lane Filtering is allowed in Arizona, and Utah, under specific conditions, it should be considered the landscape of these states' highway systems differ greatly from that of Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation opposes Lane Filtering because the practice removes the "safety pocket" for motorcycles encountering stopped traffic. If riding too fast, lane filtering motorcyclists may startle, and/or distract drivers of other vehicles. Additionally, the practice of lane filtering may also lead to driver frustration, who may perceive this practice as "cutting the line", who may then in turn overreact, and become aggressive.

Most importantly, the Department is concerned with motorcycle safety. Preliminary data shows there were 52 motor vehicle occupant related fatalities in 2024, 8 of those were motorcyclists. RIDOT continues to work towards lowering these numbers, and towards Zero Death policy. The Department will accomplish this through educational and public messaging campaigns. We are concerned that allowing this practice of Lane Filtering, allowing motorcyclists to weave through traffic, could increase crashes and injuries, resulting in death.

Again, for these reasons, I urge you to reject this legislation.

Sincerely,

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

cc: The Honorable House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable David A. Bennett
Nicole McCarthy Esq., Chief of Legal Counsel