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March 03, 2025

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

RE: 2025 H- 5901 AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES – MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Dear Chairman, Craven:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support regarding H-5901. This bill, "Provides additional exception to prohibition on usage of wireless communication device while driving and clarifies that use for purpose of navigation must be while the device is mounted or otherwise affixed to vehicle and not held in the motorist's hand."

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation, (RIDOT) fully supports efforts which serve to diminish distracted driving behaviors. The General Assembly passed the hand-held wireless legislation in 2017, and it was signed into law effective June 1, 2018. This law is necessary to prevent needless deaths, and serious injuries on our roads. If enacted, the passage of H5901 will strengthen and clarify the definition of "hands free" driving.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reviewed 2023-H5701 and suggested language which assures RIDOT's federal Distracted Driving funds will not be threatened. The current bill reflects that language and RIDOT fully supports this bill.

We thank the committee for their efforts and are available to answer any questions you may have. We encourage the committee to consider both the need for dedicated funding and the alignment of responsibilities to ensure the best outcome for this initiative.

Sincerely,

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

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Thomas Noret
Nicole McCarty Esq., Chief of Legal Counsel