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## **Rhode Island Trucking Association issues road improvement plan**

*Remains concerned with RhodeWorks data and warns  
of potential legal consequences*

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**Pawtucket, RI** – The president of the Rhode Island Trucking Association (RITA) unveiled a plan today to fix Rhode Island’s roads and bridges. The plan doesn’t involve tolling or the costly infrastructure of constructing tolling gantries, which will cost the State of Rhode Island \$43 million. The association also once again called on the Raimondo administration to release the specific tolling locations being proposed so that local business owners can fully understand the impact to their operations.

“We have always stated we want to be part of the solution, but tolls are not the answer,” said Christopher Maxwell, president of the Rhode Island Trucking Association. Our plan creates a revenue stream over the next four years totaling just over \$220 million dollars which happens to be the exact number being floated in RhodeWorks to repair 453 bridges outside of the 6/10 connector. After year four the plan will produce a yearly revenue stream of \$25.9 million. This revenue stream could be bonded by the RIDOT to address the 6/10 connector or the entire package could be bonded to address all of the projects that RhodeWorks envisions. And our plan starts immediately without expending \$43 million on gantries that will not begin to be constructed until 2018.”

### **- The Plan -**

- Increase the diesel tax by 18 cents – produces \$10.8 million annually. Current diesel tax is .34 cents. Connecticut’s gas tax is .55 cents.
- Increase Truck registration fee by \$500 per year – will produce 1.6 million annually. Rhode Island currently has the lowest truck registration fee in New England.
- Ask the state to rescind tax credits currently being proposed –reverts funds back to original purpose of bridge and road maintenance \$13.5 million annually
- Refinance GARVEE bonds will produce \$121 million in first four years – also currently proposed in RhodeWorks.

“Our plan brings a predictable revenue stream to address Rhode Island’s deteriorating roads and bridges without the uncertainty and risk contained in the RhodeWorks proposal. There are certain traffic assumptions contained in the RhodeWorks proposal that we believe are not accurate and will greatly affect projected revenue streams. The governor has already admitted that if revenue projections do not pan out her only recourse would be to increase the tolls on the trucking industry,” stated Maxell. “Our plan also guarantees cars will never be tolled by future administrations because the infrastructure will never be constructed.”

**- Problematic traffic projections -**

“We remain very concerned that the traffic data contained in the RhodeWorks proposal may contain inaccuracies. RhodeWorks currently predicts the average daily number of trucks traveling on I-195 to be 11,532 and almost oddly that the average daily truck trucks traveling on I-95 is 2966. I think the average Rhode Islander would find it hard to believe there is a 4:1 ratio of greater truck travel on I-195 over I-95. If these projections are off, and we believe they are, the governor’s revenue projections are off by millions of dollars,” stated Maxwell.

The Rhode Island Trucking Association reached out to the American Transportation Research Institute (an independent non profit which conducts transportation research) to share their concerns and evaluate the numbers and their concerns were validated. Although ATRI used GPS tracking to evaluate trucking patterns in Rhode Island, which was different than the RhodeWorks study the data is troubling.

**ATRI findings show that for every 100 trucks traveling I-95 from CT border to I-295, there are 50 trucks traveling on I-195. RhodeWorks data shows that for every 25 trucks traveling the same route on I-95 (CT line to I-295), there are 100 trucks traveling I-195.**

If the RhodeWorks data proves to be false with regard to I-195 the administrations revenue projects may be off by as much as \$30 million dollars,” stated Maxwell. “This is another example of a plan that was being pushed to fast without being properly vetted.”

**“An analysis of ATRI’s empirical truck GPS dataset shows two truck trips on I-95 between the Connecticut state line and I-295 for every one truck trip on I-195. While the sources of truck count data are different, this represents a significant difference from the RhodeWorks finding of four truck trips on I-195 to every one truck trip on I-95,” said Rebecca M. Brewster, president and Chief Operating Officer of the American Transportation Research Institute.**

**- A call for greater transparency -**

“Again we are calling on the administration to release specific tolling locations and tolling amounts at each location. The governor just held a meeting with the media assuring them they would be more transparent. If we are going to have a real debate this year why not release the locations? It is irrelevant that the FHWA has to approve the locations. The administration knows the locations that they are seeking. These locations should be shared with the public. Members of the General Assembly will certainly be better off knowing exactly what they are voting for and how it will affect businesses in their districts,” said Maxwell

**- Unintended litigation is highly likely -**

“No state in the country is initiating a toll system exclusively on trucks. It is abundantly clear that if RhodeWorks were to pass one or more entities are likely to initiate a lawsuit under the federal Commerce Clause. What if they prevail? The gantries will already be built at a cost of \$43.5 and the bonds will have been issued. This is certainly a road that we do not want to pursue but lawmakers should understand the risks involved in pursuing RhodeWorks. The inequity of

only tolling trucks is just one issue. There are also inequities in carving out certain classifications of trucks and carving out tax credits for certain elements of the trucking industry,” stated Maxell.

**- About RITA -**

The Rhode Island Trucking Association, Inc. (RITA) with over 500 members and 10,000 employees is a chartered, non-profit organization whose membership is made up of one truck owners; fleet owners; private and for hire motor carriers; and allied industries including manufacturers, dealers, service stations and suppliers. Since 1931, RITA has represented and promoted all motor carrier interests on the state level. RITA, the only statewide trucking association, has been a member of the American Trucking Association since 1944.