

**CITY OF NEWPORT**

**RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
COUNCIL**

**No. 2020-63**

- WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority (RITBA) was created in 1954 by the Rhode Island General Assembly to acquire, maintain, and operate major bridges in the state. The RITBA initially operated and maintained the Mount Hope Bridge. It was then tasked with the construction of the Claiborne Pell Bridge which opened fifty-one years ago and was, and is, the longest suspension bridge in New England; and
- WHEREAS, RITBA currently collects and uses dedicated revenue to operate and maintain the Newport Pell Bridge, the Mount Hope Bridge, the Sakonnet River Bridge, the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge, and Route 138 through Jamestown; notably, these include all three bridges which connect Aquidneck Island to the mainland; and
- WHEREAS, RITBA has kept the State's four largest bridges safe for vehicular travel and provided the needed maintenance throughout the years and has received honors from the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association; and
- WHEREAS, the Newport Pell Bridge is a pivotal aspect of Newport's economy as it allows for the easy transport of both people and cargo into Newport and all of Aquidneck Island; and
- WHEREAS, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) owns and maintains all the state's secondary bridges and has not done the same to maintain the safety of the bridges under its purview. In 2019, RI was deemed to have the worst bridges in America by the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, and out of 780 bridges, 23.1% were structurally deficient and 721, or 92%, were in need of some repair; and
- WHEREAS, proposed Rhode Island state legislation, or provisions in the state budget, may move RITBA revenues and the management authority over the State's four major bridges to RIDOT; and
- WHEREAS, RIDOT would be able to, and likely to, redirect RITBA revenues from the maintenance of the four major bridges toward bridges elsewhere in the state that have not been properly maintained and are in much poorer condition; and

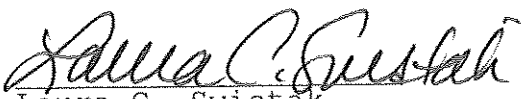
WHEREAS, although the state ranking of its bridges will likely be improved by including RITBA's far better maintained bridges in ranking analyses, RITBA's four bridges will likely suffer from deferred maintenance due to redirected funds; NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED: to protect the continued proper maintenance and safety of the four major bridges which are essential to the well-being of Newport, Aquidneck Island, and Conanicut Island, the Newport City Council opposes proposed state legislation and budget provisions that would transfer RITBA revenue and management authority to RIDOT; and BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Executive Director and Board of Directors of RITBA, Executive Director and Board of Directors of RIDOT, every Rhode Island Municipality, every State Senator, and every State Representative, as well as the Governor, Lt. Governor, Treasurer and Secretary of State.

JAMIE BOVA  
SUSAN D. TAYLOR  
LYNN UNDERWOOD CEGLIE  
KATHRYN E. LEONARD  
JEANNE-MARIE NAPOLITANO

IN COUNCIL  
READ AND PASSED  
JULY 22, 2020

  
Laura C. Swistak  
City Clerk