



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND & PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OFFICE OF THE MINORITY LEADER
ROOM 106, STATE HOUSE
PROVIDENCE
02903

BRIAN C. NEWBERRY
MINORITY LEADER
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February 12, 2016

The Honorable Nicholas A. Mattiello
Speaker of the RI House of Representatives
State House, Room 323
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Speaker Mattiello,

I write to request you open a House Oversight investigation into RIDOT and its tactics with respect to passage of the recent tolling legislation. It has come to my attention that several Democratic members of the House have written letters to constituents explaining their support for the recent tolling legislation by, in part, expressing fear that if they did not support the bill RIDOT might retaliate against their districts by, among other things, slowing down or stalling needed repair work and similar projects. If these members have indeed been pressured it is an outrageous abuse of power by the Executive branch. When I first heard of this last evening I dismissed it as unlikely but then I recalled that the bridge over which you drive to your office was mysteriously closed by RIDOT immediately after you announced your opposition to the original toll plan last spring. I want to stress that all my dealings with RIDOT and in particular their legislative staff over the years have been nothing but professional and in fact their legislative lobbyist has been one of the best and most helpful I have dealt with. I myself have seen no whiff of this pressure. That said, it is quite possible that RIDOT officials are being pressured by higher ranking members of the Executive branch and/or that other Executive branch officials are indeed making quiet threats of this nature. Either way the public deserves a full explanation from the Executive branch and it in the interest of all House members to have this issue publicly aired out.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Brian C. Newberry

Cc: Members of the House of Representative