

For Immediate Release

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INVESTING ADDITIONAL \$54.5 MILLION IN RHODE ISLAND BRIDGES UNDER NEW LAW AUTHORED BY SENATOR REED

Additional funding aiding states with high percentage of poor bridge decks

The federal government will be investing an additional \$54.5 million in Rhode Island bridge improvement and repair projects this year thanks to provisions in a new spending law authored by U.S. Senator Jack Reed. Reed joined with Governor Gina Raimondo, the Congressional delegation, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and Mayors Elorza and DaSilva today at the Henderson Bridge today to lay out plans for the funds.

Senator Reed, the ranking member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD), successfully included a \$475 million grant program in the fiscal year 2019 spending law that will provide funding to assist states with the highest percentage of bridge deck area in poor condition. As a result, Senator Reed estimates that Rhode Island will receive about \$54.5 million to help finance its urgently needed bridge repairs.

Senator Reed joined Governor Gina Raimondo, U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, U.S. Representative Jim Langevin, U.S. Representative David Cicilline, Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza, East Providence Mayor Roberto DaSilva, RIDOT Director Peter Alviti and Building Trades Council President Michael Sabitoni at an event overlooking the structurally deficient Henderson Bridge, which is set to undergo a \$70 million renovation, to discuss efforts to make bridge improvements and transportation investments that will help create jobs and improve the safety and efficiency of the state's transportation network.

Built in 1969, the Henderson Bridge is a 26-span, 2,000-foot bridge which carries vehicles over the Seekonk River from East Providence to Providence. By replacing this bridge, RIDOT will reduce its statewide structurally deficient bridge area by 12 percent.

Senator Reed stated, "Bridges are about connecting communities, creating opportunities, and bringing people together. As the top Democrat on the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, I have focused my efforts on addressing the single biggest transportation challenge we face in Rhode Island - our high percentage of structurally bridges."

He added, "I am pleased to have provided an additional infusion of federal dollars this year to address structurally deficient bridges and open new doors of economic opportunity and development. As a result, Rhode Island will receive a \$54.5 million boost to help advance work on bridge upgrades likes this one. The federal government must be a reliable partner when it comes to infrastructure. America's economic success depends on the strength of our transportation network, public schools and energy and water systems. I will continue working to ensure the federal government does its part and wisely invests in these priorities."

"Senator Reed has been a great champion for the infrastructure projects in Rhode Island," said Senator Whitehouse, a senior member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. "Upgrading our roads and bridges is one of the federal delegation's top priorities. On the Environment and Public Works Committee, I'm fighting for a major infrastructure investment to bring roads and bridges here and across the country in line with modern safety standards and to create jobs on a large scale."

The Henderson Bridge and Henderson Expressway were overbuilt as they were originally constructed as part of an unfinished highway. Approximately 20,000 vehicles cross it daily and there are six lanes. It has been rated as structurally deficient since 1996 when RIDOT first started keeping such records. As a result, RIDOT has spent \$4 million over the last ten years on repairs to keep it safe. It has been load rated four times since 2010 due to the continual and increasing amounts of deterioration.

The first phase of construction will take the bridge down to one lane in each direction. It will also include 2,500 feet of separated bike/pedestrian path infrastructure. The smaller footprint will require less maintenance and will free up almost 33 acres for potential development and recreational use.

The two cities associated with this bridge, Providence and East Providence, held charrettes to look at multimodal uses for this bridge and the expressway area. RIDOT will work with both cities to ensure the best use of space as the project moves forward.

"Thanks to RhodeWorks, we're making progress improving our state's infrastructure, and replacing Henderson Bridge is a major step.," Governor Raimondo said. "I want to thank Senator Reed for securing this funding and being a stalwart champion for Rhode Island in the United States Senate. This critical, long-term investment will transform the area and benefit Rhode Islanders for generations."

Congressman David Cicilline said, "I'm proud of the work the Congressional delegation has been able to do at the federal level in partnership with the Governor and RIDOT to make sure Rhode Island has the resources it needs to continue repairing and improving our state's bridges. This investment of federal funds will ensure RhodeWorks continues its important efforts to strengthen Rhode Island's infrastructure. I would like to thank Senator Reed for his efforts."

"This new federal funding is a down payment for the restoration of Rhode Island's structurally deficient bridges that are in desperate need of repair," said Congressman Langevin. "I want to thank Senator Reed for securing this funding and Governor Raimondo and RIDOT Director Alvit for their ongoing work to repair our roads and bridges."

"We're incredibly thankful for Senator Reed's commitment to address local infrastructure needs," said Providence Mayor Jorge O. Elorza. "The Henderson Bridge serves as an important gateway for our capital city. This important long-term investment will enhance mobility and improve the quality of space and life for surrounding communities."

"We are truly grateful to Senator Jack Reed for his leadership in being able to secure the funds to bring much needed improvements to the Henderson Bridge, which will create better access to

Waterfront Drive and our waterfront as a whole," East Providence Mayor Roberto DaSilva said. "The transformation of Henderson Bridge not only fortifies the collaboration between two cities, but also allows residents of the state and the region to benefit from what will be a destination spot for generations to come."

Additional funds of approximately \$15.1 million for highway improvements are also in the bill. RIDOT will take some time to determine how these funds should be allocated.

RIDOT Director Peter Alviti said, "Senator Reed's leadership in bringing these funds to Rhode Island has been nothing short of miraculous. We thank him for his confidence in the Governor's RhodeWorks program. Clearly he understands that RhodeWorks is producing results and is a good investment."

The first phase of the Henderson Bridge replacement is expected to create about 800 job years. The state will be asked to match 20 percent of the project cost.