

2026 -- H 7984

LC005776

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCE -- INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY  
AUDIT OF THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Introduced By: Representatives Tanzi, Speakman, McGaw, Alzate, Boylan, Spears,  
Donovan, Chippendale, Batista, and Shanley

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 35 of the General Laws entitled "PUBLIC FINANCE" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 25

4 INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY AUDIT OF THE RHODE ISLAND

5 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

6 **35-25-1. Independent performance and efficiency audit required.**

7 (a) The auditor general shall conduct and oversee a comprehensive performance and  
8 efficiency audit of the Rhode Island department of transportation.

9 (b) The audit shall:

10 (1) Be benchmarked against regional peer state transportation agencies in the northeastern  
11 United States including, but not limited to, agencies in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York;

12 (2) Evaluate organizational structure, capital project delivery, procurement practices,  
13 maintenance operations, financial controls, staffing levels, performance metrics, and cost  
14 efficiencies;

15 (3) Establish benchmark performance dates and measurable targets for each major  
16 operational division of the department;

17 (4) Include segmented review deadlines, with the final segment and comprehensive report  
18 to be completed no later than January 30, 2027.

1           (c) The audit shall be conducted independently and shall not be subject to approval,  
2 modification, or preview by the Rhode Island department of transportation prior to its public  
3 release.

4           **35-25-2. Oversight, scope and direction.**

5           (a) The auditor general shall determine and control the scope, methodology, direction, and  
6 findings of the audit.

7           (b) The auditor general shall consult with and receive legal and technical assistance from  
8 the attorney general as necessary to ensure compliance, independence, and enforceability of this  
9 chapter.

10          (c) Neither the department of transportation nor any executive branch official shall interfere  
11 with, limit, or direct the scope or findings of the audit.

12          **35-25-3. Consultant authority.**

13          (a) The auditor general is hereby authorized to procure, retain, and compensate independent  
14 consultants, subject matter experts, forensic auditors, and other professional services as necessary  
15 to assist in completion of the audit.

16          (b) All consultants shall operate under the supervision and direction of the auditor general.

17          (c) Consultants retained pursuant to this chapter shall have full access to all records,  
18 documents, electronic data, contracts, personnel information (subject to applicable privacy laws),  
19 and other materials deemed necessary by the auditor general.

20          **35-25-4. Mandatory compliance.**

21          (a) The Rhode Island department of transportation shall fully cooperate with the auditor  
22 general and all authorized consultants.

23          (b) The department shall:

24               (1) Provide timely access to records and personnel;

25               (2) Respond promptly to written and oral requests;

26               (3) Designate a liaison officer for coordination purposes only.

27          (c) Failure to comply with lawful requests issued pursuant to this chapter may be enforced  
28 by application to the superior court for appropriate relief, including injunctive orders.

29          **35-25-5. Funding.**

30          (a) There is hereby appropriated the sum of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000), or  
31 so much thereof as may be necessary, to the office of the auditor general for fiscal year 2026–2027  
32 for the purpose of hiring consultants and supporting completion of the audit required by this  
33 chapter.

34          (b) Funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall not revert until completion of the audit.

1           **35-25-6. Reporting and publication.**

2           (a) The final audit report shall be submitted to:

3           (1) The speaker of the house;

4           (2) The president of the senate;

5           (3) The governor;

6           (4) The attorney general.

7           (b) Upon submission, the report shall be immediately made publicly available.

8           (c) No draft report shall be provided to the department of transportation for advance review  
9 or comment prior to publication.

10           **35-25-7. Severability.**

11           If any provision of this chapter is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall not be  
12 affected.

13           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC FINANCE -- INDEPENDENT PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY  
AUDIT OF THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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- 1           This act would require that an independent performance and efficiency audit be conducted
- 2   for the department of transportation by the auditor general.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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