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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- RHODE ISLAND TOWING
INDUSTRY MODERNIZATION AND REGULATORY EQUITY ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Craven, Dawson, DeSimone, and O'Brien

Date Introduced: March 27, 2026

Referred To: House Corporations

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings and purpose.

2 (1) The general assembly finds that:

3 (i) Tow truck operators perform essential public safety services on the highways of this
4 state.

5 (ii) The towing industry operates in hazardous roadside conditions requiring standardized
6 safety training.

7 (iii) The current tariff modification process lacks statutory timelines and shared regulatory
8 accountability.

9 (iv) Public safety, consumer protection, and economic sustainability require modernization
10 of regulatory oversight.

11 (2) The purpose of this chapter is to:

12 (i) Establish mandatory tow operator licensing standards;

13 (ii) Create a Rhode Island towing advisory board as a public body;

14 (iii) Establish a consulting relationship between the division of public utilities and carriers
15 and the Rhode Island towing advisory board;

16 (iv) Mandate transparent and timely tariff modification procedures;

17 (v) Strengthen enforcement against unlicensed towing operations.

18 SECTION 2. Title 39 of the General Laws entitled "PUBLIC UTILITIES AND

1 CARRIERS" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

2 CHAPTER 12.2

3 RHODE ISLAND TOWING INDUSTRY MODERNIZATION AND REGULATORY ACT

4 **39-12.2-1. Tow operator licensing requirement.**

5 (a) No individual shall operate a tow truck within the state unless:

6 (1) The operator possesses a certificate of public convenience issued by the administrator
7 of the division of public utilities and carriers ("DPUC").

8 (2) The operator of the tow vehicle is properly licensed, to include a commercial driver's
9 license, if applicable, for the operation of the tow vehicle.

10 (3) The division of public utilities and carriers, in consultation with the Rhode Island
11 towing advisory board pursuant to § 39-12.2-3, shall promulgate regulations establishing minimum
12 training standards and annual continuing education requirements of not less than eight (8) hours.

13 (d) Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting any municipality from
14 establishing or enforcing rules of operation for tow truck operators not inconsistent with the
15 provisions of this chapter and the rules and regulations promulgated by the DPUC for operation of
16 tow trucks within the municipality's jurisdiction.

17 **39-12.2-2. Establishment of Rhode Island towing advisory board.**

18 (a) There is hereby established the Rhode Island towing advisory board ("advisory board").

19 (b) The advisory board shall consist of six (6) members:

20 (1) Two (2) representatives appointed by the Rhode Island public towing association;

21 (2) One representative of the division of public utilities and carriers appointed by the
22 administrator of the department;

23 (3) One representative of the department of transportation appointed by the department's
24 director;

25 (4) One representative of the Rhode Island state police appointed by the director of public
26 safety, who shall serve as chairperson; and

27 (5) One public member appointed by the governor.

28 (c) Members of the board shall receive no compensation for their service.

29 (d) The board shall meet at least annually at the call of the chairperson.

30 (e) The board shall have the following duties:

31 (1) Provide advice and recommendations to the DPUC regarding:

32 (i) Tariff rate approvals and modifications;

33 (ii) Licensing standards;

34 (iii) Enforcement policies;

1 (iv) Training, safety, tooling and technology standards; and

2 (v) Other matters as requested by the DPUC.

3 (2) Assist the DPUC in providing transparency and information to the public regarding
4 licensed tow operations and authorized tariff rates.

5 (f) Vacancies on the board shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

6 (g) A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.

7 **39-12.2-3. Rules and regulations.**

8 (a) The DPUC shall establish by rules and regulations, after consultation with the advisory
9 board, tariff rate approvals and modifications, licensing standards, enforcement policy, and safety
10 regulations.

11 (b) No tariff rate, rule, or regulation shall be adopted pursuant to this chapter by the DPUC
12 without consultation with the advisory board.

13 (c) All actions taken pursuant to this chapter shall be subject to the provisions of chapter
14 35 of title 42 ("administrative procedures").

15 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- RHODE ISLAND TOWING
INDUSTRY MODERNIZATION AND REGULATORY EQUITY ACT

- 1 This act would establish the Rhode Island towing advisory board, to provide advice to the
- 2 DPUC regarding the DPUC's regulation of tow truck operators.
- 3 This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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