

2026 -- H 7763 SUBSTITUTE A

LC004995/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO PROPERTY -- MAINTENANCE OF PRIVATE EASEMENTS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Introduced By: Representatives Shallcross Smith, Boylan, Fellela, and DeSimone

Date Introduced: February 12, 2026

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 34-9.1-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 34-9.1 entitled
- 2 "Maintenance of Private Easements and Rights-Of-Way" is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 3 **34-9.1-2. Maintenance of private easement and rights-of-way.**
- 4 (a) In the absence of an enforceable, written agreement to the contrary, the owner of any
- 5 residential real property that benefits from an easement or right-of-way, the purpose of which is to
- 6 provide access to the residential real property, shall be responsible for the cost of maintaining the
- 7 easement or right-of-way in good repair and the cost of repairing or restoring any damaged portion
- 8 of the easement or right-of-way. The maintenance shall include, but not be limited to, the removal
- 9 of snow from the easement or right-of-way.
- 10 (b) In the absence of an enforceable, written agreement, the cost of maintaining and
- 11 repairing or restoring the easement or right-of-way shall be shared by each owner of a benefited
- 12 property in proportion to the benefit received by each property; ~~provided, that the market value or~~
- 13 ~~assessed valuation of each such property shall not be taken into consideration in the calculation of~~
- 14 ~~benefit received.~~
- 15 (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, any owner of
- 16 a benefited property or any owner of a burdened property who directly or indirectly damages any
- 17 portion of the easement or right-of way shall be solely responsible for repairing or restoring the
- 18 portion damaged by that owner.

1 (d) If any owner of a benefited or burdened property refuses to repair or restore a damaged
2 portion of an easement or right-of-way in accordance with this section, or fails, after a demand in
3 writing, to pay the owner's proportion of the cost of maintaining or repairing or restoring the
4 easement or right-of-way in accordance with subsection (b), an action for specific performance or
5 contribution may be brought in the superior court against the owner by other owners of benefited
6 or burdened properties, either jointly or severally.

7 (e) In the event of any conflict between the provisions of this section and an agreement
8 described in subsections (a) or (b) of this section, the terms of the agreement shall control.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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1 This act would repeal provisions providing that the market value or assessed valuation of
2 a property that benefits from an easement or right-of-way would not be taken into consideration in
3 calculating the benefit received by each property.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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