

2012 -- H 7704

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION DESIGNATE THE PORTS OF RHODE ISLAND AS DESTINATION  
PORTS AS PART OF THE CURRENT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
MARINE HIGHWAY SHIPPING PROGRAM

Introduced By: Representatives Lally, Ruggiero, Tanzi, and DaSilva

Date Introduced: February 16, 2012

Referred To: House Environment and Natural Resources

1           WHEREAS, United States Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has identified 18  
2 marine corridors and designated six initiatives for further development as part of “America’s  
3 Marine Highway Program”; and

4           WHEREAS, These all-water routes consist of 11 corridors that can serve as extensions of  
5 the United States transportation system; and

6           WHEREAS, These corridors identify routes where water transportation presents an  
7 opportunity to offer relief from landside traffic congestion, excessive air emissions, and other  
8 environmental concerns or challenges; and

9           WHEREAS, In these corridors, Secretary LaHood has designated the nearby Port of New  
10 Bedford as a Marine Highway Initiative; and

11           WHEREAS, In 2009, the Rhode Island General Assembly established a Special  
12 Legislative Commission to Study Potential Economic Opportunities in the Development of Port  
13 Facilities in Rhode Island, known as the “Port Commission,” and charged it with studying Rhode  
14 Island’s port-related economy, with the intent of making specific recommendations to better  
15 utilize Rhode Island’s coastal resources and unique geographic location to create employment  
16 opportunities for Rhode Islanders during the worst economic downturn since the Great  
17 Depression; and

18           WHEREAS, After completing three years of study, the Commission has learned that:

1 (1) The Port of Providence has received a \$10.5 million TIGER grant that will fund the  
2 purchase and installation of two high performance harbor cranes which will enhance the port's  
3 ability to continue its existing bulk material operations, while expanding its capabilities to  
4 accommodate container operations;

5 (2) The Port of Davisville also received a \$22.3 million TIGER grant that will fund pier  
6 and structural improvements, and install railroad track, ballast, and ties in the Pier 2 area, as well  
7 as purchase a port crane; and

8 (3) These capital investments enable both facilities to better accommodate Marine  
9 Highway cargo shipments; and

10 (4) The ports both have extensive rail interconnections into Rhode Island's \$230 million  
11 Freight Rail Improvement Project; and

12 (5) The Port of Davisville also provides a 7,500-foot main runway with instrument  
13 landing systems, making the facility truly intermodal; and

14 (6) The Port of Providence will post a 44-foot draft, capable of accepting most world-  
15 scale cargo vessels; and

16 (7) Upon completion of its proposed dredging program, the Port of Davisville, the 5<sup>th</sup>  
17 largest auto import facility in the U.S. specializing in RO-RO and ship channel, will post a 35-  
18 foot draft, which will be enough to accommodate all current and future automotive ships; and

19 (8) ProvPort's 2008 cargo volume exceeded 3.1 million tons, ranking it second in New  
20 England after Boston; and

21 (9) The Port of Davisville is a designated foreign trade zone (105) only eight nautical  
22 miles from open water and is capable of handling other cargos, such as processed fish, and project  
23 cargos, such as steel and wind energy components; and

24 (10) Both ports provide easy access for hinterland cargos as they are situated close to  
25 major interstate arteries, including the state's \$600 million I-195/I-95 relocation and enhancement  
26 project and the recently completed \$130 million Route 403 access highway to Routes 4 and I-95;  
27 now, therefore be it

28 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and  
29 Providence Plantations hereby requests that the United States Department of Transportation  
30 designate the Ports of Rhode Island as destination ports as part of the current planning and  
31 implementation of the Marine Highway Shipping Program, thus yielding additional federal  
32 funding and creating new jobs while offering relief from landside traffic congestion, excessive air  
33 emissions, and other environmental concerns; and be it further

34 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and he is hereby authorized and directed to

1 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood.

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