

2019 -- H 6249

LC002899

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2019

HOUSE RESOLUTION

JOYOUSLY CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE
CLAIBORNE PELL NEWPORT BRIDGE

Introduced By: Representatives Carson, Abney, Shekarchi, Ruggiero, and Filippi

Date Introduced: June 24, 2019

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, The idea of building a bridge to connect the City of Newport on Aquidneck
2 Island with the Town of Jamestown on Conanicut Island began, according to Evan Smith,
3 President and CEO of Discover Newport and the Chairman for the Rhode Island Turnpike and
4 Bridge Authority's 50th Anniversary Celebration Committee, in 1940 based on the belief that
5 building this bridge would foster increased economic development and commerce to Aquidneck
6 Island; and

7 WHEREAS, Originally, there were eleven proposed locations for the bridge, which
8 fostered vigorous debate. On March 30, 1960, the Senate Finance Committee held an open
9 hearing regarding the proposed bridge, and later, then-Governor John H. Chaffee became a
10 passionate supporter of building this bridge; and

11 WHEREAS, The Newport Bridge was constructed from 1966 to 1969. Bethlehem Steel
12 won the bid to construct the bridge at a cost of \$18.9 million, all paid for by Rhode Island State
13 bonds. The Newport Bridge's main span is 1601 feet, making it the longest suspension bridge in
14 New England. The overall length of the bridge is 11,247 feet; and

15 WHEREAS, The Newport Bridge opened on June 28, 1969, with Frank Licht serving as
16 the Governor of Rhode Island at the time of its opening. On opening day, more than 15,000 cars
17 crossed the Bridge, and in less than a year, on April 20, 1970, the one millionth vehicle had
18 crossed the bridge. In 1992, the Bridge was renamed the Claiborne Pell Newport Bridge, in honor
19 of the former United States Senator from Rhode Island, but it is still most commonly known as

1 the Newport Bridge; and

2 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority will be hosting a public
3 celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the Newport Bridge on Friday, June 28,
4 2019, at Fort Adams State Park, with live music, dancing, food trucks, fireworks, and other
5 entertainment amenities being available. Also, the Newport and Jamestown historical societies
6 are currently hosting and displaying exhibits celebrating the Newport Bridge; and

7 WHEREAS, Since its opening, the Newport Bridge has become an indelible part of the
8 culture of the State of Rhode Island and a vital component to the overall economic well-being of
9 not just Aquidneck Island and Jamestown, but for the entire State; now, therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island and
11 Providence Plantations hereby joyously celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the
12 Claiborne Pell Newport Bridge on June 28, 2019; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
14 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mr. Evan Smith, President and CEO of
15 Discover Newport, and Chairman of the Rhode Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority's 50th
16 Anniversary Celebration Committee.

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