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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF STATE
ROADS

Introduced By: Senators Vargas, Urso, DiMario, Bell, Valverde, Britto, Murray, and
Thompson

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 24-8-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 24-8 entitled "Construction
2 and Maintenance of State Roads" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **24-8-11. Beautification.**

4 (a) The department of transportation is hereby authorized and empowered to plant trees,
5 shrubs, forbs, and grasses and otherwise beautify the area within the limits of a road, including state
6 highways in a manner and at locations as the department may deem advisable. Plantings shall
7 include pollinator-friendly native species when appropriate and the cost of the work shall be paid
8 from moneys, appropriated for highway purposes, not otherwise needed for the construction,
9 reconstruction and maintenance of state roads and bridges; and the state controller is hereby
10 authorized and directed to draw his or her orders upon the general treasurer for the payment of such
11 sums as may from time to time be required, upon receipt by him or her of proper vouchers approved
12 by the director of transportation. The department shall seek suggestions from apiarists,
13 horticulturists and other certified professionals to identify the appropriate types of plants and
14 locations that benefits pollinators. For purposes of this section "pollinators" means insects to
15 include, but not limited to, bees that help carry pollen from the male part of the flower to the female
16 part of the same or another flower.

17 (b) Any and all activities performed by the department of transportation to benefit
18 pollinators on roadsides and state highways shall be consistent with the best practices required in §

1 [23 U.S.C. 332.](#)

2 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 authorize and empower the department of transportation to plant pollinator
- 2 friendly native species of trees, shrubs, grasses and plants within limits of a roadway, including
- 3 state highways.
- 4 The department would follow guidelines to benefit pollinators consistent with § 23
- 5 U.S.C.332.
- 6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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