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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HIGHWAYS -- RHODE ISLAND TURNPIKE AND BRIDGE AUTHORITY

Introduced By: Senators Ciccone, Britto, Burke, Thompson, Felag, and DiPalma

Date Introduced: March 27, 2026

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 24-12-37 of the General Laws in Chapter 24-12 entitled "Rhode
2 Island Turnpike and Bridge Authority" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **24-12-37. Penalty for nonpayment of toll — Toll violators and toll evaders.**

4 (a) Legislative findings. The general assembly finds as follows:

5 (1) That all users of any tolled projects should be required to timely pay for the use of such
6 projects;

7 (2) That toll violators and toll evaders unfairly shift the financial burden of maintaining the
8 tolled projects to other project users; and

9 (3) Rhode Island has a strong interest in ensuring that its transportation infrastructure is
10 adequately funded in a fair and equitable manner.

11 (b) In each instance when a person fails or refuses to pay or prepay the required toll on a
12 tolled project, and is issued a violation for the same, the toll violator shall pay the toll amount within
13 fourteen (14) days of issuance of the violation.

14 (c) Any toll violator who fails to pay the toll amount due within the fourteen-day (14)
15 period in subsection (b) shall immediately incur a forty-dollar (\$40.00) administrative fee in
16 addition to the unpaid toll amount.

17 (d) Any toll violator who fails to pay the administrative fee and unpaid toll as required by
18 subsection (c) within forty-five (45) days of the issuance of the original violation, shall incur a
19 thirty five-dollar (\$35.00) administrative fee in addition to the forty dollar (\$40.00) administrative

1 fee and the unpaid toll amount. The toll amount and administrative fees shall be paid to the
2 authority.

3 (e) Toll evaders shall be responsible for any tolls and administrative fees applicable to toll
4 violators. Further, at the request of the authority, any toll evader shall also promptly receive a traffic
5 violation summons that shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island traffic tribunal,
6 which may suspend the toll evader's driver's license for up to six (6) months for the violations and
7 assess a fine of up to five hundred dollars (\$500), or both. All tolls, administrative fees, and fines
8 shall be payable to the authority.

9 (f) If any unpaid toll amounts, administrative fees, and fines are not paid within ninety (90)
10 days of the issuance of the original violation, and the toll violator has incurred at least ten (10)
11 instances in which such toll violator has failed to pay any required toll amounts, administrative
12 fees, and fines, then the authority may report the person as a toll violator, or, if appropriate, as a
13 toll evader, to the Rhode Island division of motor vehicles, who then shall not permit that person
14 to renew his or her driver's license and vehicle registration until any unpaid toll amounts,
15 administrative fees, and fines are paid to the authority. Upon the authority's receipt of such payment
16 or a written repayment agreement between the person and the authority, the authority shall promptly
17 issue a verbal, written, or electric confirmation showing the amounts paid and a certification that
18 the person does not owe any amounts to the authority or has otherwise made satisfactory repayment
19 arrangements with the authority. In any such case, the Rhode Island division of motor vehicles shall
20 forthwith release any hold placed for this purpose on the person's license renewal and vehicle
21 registration renewal. If a person who made satisfactory repayment arrangements with the authority
22 subsequently fails to honor and comply with such arrangements with the authority according to
23 their terms, the authority may re-report the person to the Rhode Island division of motor vehicles
24 which shall then prohibit that person from renewing their driver's license and vehicle registration
25 until the originally unpaid toll amounts, administrative fees, and fines are paid to the authority. [This](#)
26 [provision of this subsection shall not apply to any vehicle owned by a rental company as defined](#)
27 [in §31-34.1-1.](#)

28 (g) "Toll violator" means, for the purposes of this section, any person who uses any project
29 and fails to pay or prepay the required toll.

30 (h) "Toll evader" means, for the purposes of this section, any person who uses a project,
31 fails or refuses to pay or prepay the required toll, and deliberately circumvents or proceeds around
32 or through a gate or other barrier on a project; and/or any toll violator who fails or refuses to pay
33 or prepay the required toll on a tolled project at least twenty (20) or more times, received at least
34 three (3) written notices from the authority (or its agent) regarding the non-payment of tolls, and is

1 not a party to, or in current compliance with, a written repayment plan with the authority.

2 (i) The authority may promulgate appropriate rules and regulations to ensure the proper
3 administration of the provisions of this section. Any person aggrieved by the authority's assessment
4 of any administrative fees may request review of such assessment through the process established
5 by the authority, which shall not be subject to the provisions of chapter 35 of title 42.

6 (j) For the purposes of this section only, "person" means the registered owner, EZPass
7 account holder, driver, rentee, or lessee of a motor vehicle. In the case of a motor vehicle owned
8 by a rental company, "person" means the rentee or lessee of the vehicle at the time of the violation,
9 provided that the rental company complies with subsections (o) and (p) of this section.

10 (k) This section shall apply retroactively to all persons who are toll evaders as of the
11 effective date of this act [October 1, 2016].

12 (l) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to reduce or otherwise eliminate
13 any tolls, fines, or penalties a person owes to the authority based upon violations occurring prior to
14 the effective date of this act [October 1, 2016].

15 (m) It is unlawful for any person or business, other than an authorized representative of the
16 authority, or any other duly authorized and existing toll or transportation agency, to sell, lease, rent,
17 or offer for sale, lease or rent, any tokens, tickets, passes, transponders, or other evidences of
18 payment issued for passage on any project. Any person or business who or that is found in violation
19 of this subsection shall be punished, for each offense, by a fine of not more than five hundred
20 dollars (\$500).

21 (n) If any provision of this section or its application to any person is deemed invalid, any
22 such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions of this section that may lawfully be given effect
23 without the invalid provision.

24 (o) Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, a rental company, as
25 defined in § 31-34.1-1, that is the registered owner of a motor vehicle shall be entitled to establish
26 non-liability for toll violations, administrative fees, and fines by providing to the traffic tribunal a
27 copy of a written rental or lease agreement which shall be prima facie evidence that the lessee was
28 the operator of the vehicle.

29 (p) The issuing authority shall provide to the owner of a rented or leased vehicle a notice,
30 in writing, of each toll violation in which a motor vehicle owned by the rental or leasing company
31 is involved, including the license number of the vehicle and the date and time of the toll violation.
32 Upon receipt of this notice the owner of a rented or leased vehicle shall inform the issuing authority,
33 within twenty (20) days, to the extent available, the operator's name, home address, employer,
34 employer's address, and local address, if any.

1 (g) The renter or lessee shall not be considered an agent of the owner if the owner is
2 engaged in the business of renting or leasing vehicles.

3 SECTION 2. Section 31-3-6.3 of the General Laws in Chapter 31-3 entitled "Registration
4 of Vehicles" is hereby amended to read as follows:

5 **31-3-6.3. Unpaid out-of-state toll amounts, administrative fees, and fines — Denial of**
6 **registration — Denial of transfer of registration — Denial of renewal of registration and**
7 **licenses.**

8 (a) Upon receipt of a request from another state or other entity with similar tolling authority
9 with which the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority has entered into an agreement providing
10 for the reciprocal treatment of out-of-state toll violators to take action against a toll violator, the
11 Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority shall conduct an independent review of each toll
12 violation that forms the basis for such request, which shall include a review of photographic, video,
13 or other visual evidence, to determine that the requesting state or other entity with similar tolling
14 authority imposed any toll amounts, administrative fees, and/or fines against the actual registered
15 owner of the motor vehicle.

16 (b) As part of its independent review, the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority shall
17 provide written notice to the registered owner of the motor vehicle in question. The registered
18 owner shall have ten (10) days from the date on the written notice to contact the Rhode Island
19 turnpike and bridge authority and to provide information, documentation, and any other evidence
20 contesting the requested action against the out-of-state toll violator. Thereafter, the Rhode Island
21 turnpike and bridge authority shall consider all of the information, documentation, and any other
22 evidence provided as part of its independent review.

23 (c) If after its independent review the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority is
24 satisfied that any toll amounts, administrative fees, and/or fines are properly imposed against the
25 actual registered owner of the motor vehicle and the registered owner could be subject to reporting
26 to the division of motor vehicles pursuant to § 24-12-37 if such toll violations had occurred on
27 tolled projects in this state, the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority may report the registered
28 owner to the division of motor vehicles.

29 (d) The division of motor vehicles shall not renew any operator's license or registration
30 upon expiration thereof; register any motor vehicle; or transfer the registration of any motor vehicle
31 of any person reported to it pursuant to subsection (c) of this section until any toll amounts,
32 administrative fees, and/or fines owed to the other state or other entity with similar tolling authority
33 have been paid in full or the person has entered into, and is in current compliance with, a repayment
34 agreement with respect to any amounts owed. The Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority shall

1 provide a copy of any notification received from the other state or other entity with similar tolling
2 authority regarding full payment of amounts owed or the existence of a repayment agreement to
3 the division of motor vehicles within five (5) business days of receipt. Within five (5) business days
4 of receiving such notification, the division of motor vehicles shall renew the person's license and
5 renew, transfer, or issue the person's registration. [The provisions of this subsection shall not apply](#)
6 [to any vehicle owned by a rental company as defined in § 31-34.1-1.](#)

7 SECTION 3. 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 provide that motor vehicle rental companies be entitled to establish non-
2 liability for toll violations, administrative fees, and fines by providing a rental or lease agreement
3 to the traffic tribunal as prima facie evidence that a lessee was the vehicle operator, and would
4 exempt car rental companies from registration penalties resulting from out-of-state toll violations
5 from operators using their rental vehicles.

6 This act would take effect upon passage.

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