STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENDORSE THE NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

Introduced By: Senators DiPalma, Ruggerio, Miller, Ciccone, and Euer

Date Introduced: January 19, 2021

Referred To: Senate Commerce

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

WHEREAS, The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) stated in its 2017 report card that the United States received a grade of D+ regarding the current state of infrastructure and that more than four and a half trillion dollars would be needed to restore the nation’s infrastructure to a state of good repair. Over two trillion dollars is currently not funded and the remainder is inadequately funded. New 21st-century projects are also unfunded; and

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Section of ASCE gave the State a C- in its June, 2020, report card. Among the grades were: Bridges D-, Drinking Water C+, Ports C, Rail B-, Roads D, and Wastewater C. Forty-four percent of Rhode Island’s gas lines are over 50 years old and require repair and upgrade; twenty-two percent of Rhode Island’s 779 bridges are structurally deficient -- the worst in the nation; Providence Water, the largest treatment facility in New England, is almost 100 years old, and its distribution network shows higher lead concentrations than are permitted by the EPA; and

WHEREAS, A new National Infrastructure Bank (NIB) could directly finance much of the infrastructure of Rhode Island in partnership with state and local governments, the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, and other institutions; it would also hire people who have lost their jobs during the COVID pandemic; and

WHEREAS, The NIB is modeled on previous banks which helped build much of our infrastructure under Presidents George Washington, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, and
Franklin D. Roosevelt. The last such bank helped bring us out of the Depression and win WWII;

WHEREAS, Congress introduced H.R. 3339, The National Infrastructure Bank Act of 2020, this spring to create a new National Infrastructure Bank. This legislation creates a $4 trillion bank, authorized to invest in infrastructure projects only. It would require no new federal spending and be capitalized by repurposing existing Treasury debt, as was done previously in U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, The new National Infrastructure Bank will create twenty-five million new high-paying jobs, pay Davis-Bacon wages, ensure Project Labor Agreements, and include Buy American provisions. Disadvantaged Business Enterprises will be directly involved in building the projects, and the bill mandates large-scale minority hiring. According to experts, the Bank will grow the economy by 4-5 percent per year as did its predecessors; and

WHEREAS, Many organizations have issued endorsements. Seventeen state legislatures have introduced or passed resolutions of support, as have county and city councils. Endorsements include: The Providence, City Council, The National Congress of Black Women, the National Association of Counties, the US High Speed Rail Association, the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers, The American Sustainable Business Council, the National Association of Minority Contractors, the National Federation of Federal Employees and many more organizations; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island hereby respectfully requests the United States Congress to pass H.R. 3339, that would create a National Infrastructure Bank in order to finance urgently needed infrastructure projects; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, Governor Daniel McKee, and the President of the United States.

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