



RHODE ISLAND BICYCLE COALITION

*Testimony of Alex Krogh-Grabbe
On Behalf of the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition*

*House Finance Committee
Wednesday March 9, 2016*

In Support of Article 5, Capital Development, Section 1 (3) Green Economy

Dear Chairman Gallison and members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Alex Krogh-Grabbe, and I am the Executive Director of the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition. I offer the support of our coalition and its more than one hundred members for passage of the entire \$35 million Green Economy Bond. All seven of these programs are smart investments in Rhode Island's economy, and we encourage your support of the entire measure. But especially I wish to convey to you that while our current bike paths are excellent assets to the state, their lack of connectivity means we're not realizing their full economic potential.

The Bike Coalition serves to make bicycling in the Ocean State safer, more comfortable, and more accessible for everyone. In particular, we focus on addressing the barriers faced by the 60% of people who would like to bike more, but are not comfortable biking in traffic with cars. For these people, off-road bike paths are the best place to bike. If we close the gaps and expand the network Rhode Island will become a destination that draws even more people who want to bicycle, including visitors from out of state.

To compete in the global economy, we need to be **a place where young talent wants to live**. Recently in Boston, biotech company Biogen moved its offices back to bikeable Kenmore Square just two years after a move to a suburban campus negatively effected morale. They joined other companies choosing bikeable locations in Boston such as Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Pfizer, and Lincoln Labs. General Electric, when choosing to move its headquarters from Connecticut, consulted both Boston and Providence about our relative quality of life. Investing in bike infrastructure is critical for attracting businesses to our state.

The **return on investment** for bike path construction is huge. A recent study concluded that for every \$1 million invested in infrastructure for biking and walking, \$1.2 million is added to a state's GDP. The return can be even more significant for bridging gaps in existing path networks: when North Carolina recently invested in a bike/ped bridge over I-40 to connect two sections of the American Tobacco Trail, annual visitor impact immediately jumped from \$3.7 million to \$6.1 million, in the year after the bridge was completed. The connections this bond would invest in are similar projects, so it is reasonable to estimate that this investment would pay for itself and more in the first year.

We know that investment in quality of life comes with immediate economic returns. That's why we urge you to support not only the bikeway bond but the entire package. All seven programs are important for Rhode Island's economy, our quality of life, and our environment.

Respectfully,

Alex Krogh-Grabbe