STATEMENT CONCERNING CHAFEE ADMINISTRATION’S EXPANSION OF SURFACE PARKING AT STATE HOUSE

October 24, 2013

Grow Smart RI is a statewide nonprofit policy research and advocacy organization focused on promoting sustainable economic growth that leverages and builds on Rhode Island’s exceptional quality of place. One of the principal ways we pursue these objectives is by working to advance a 21st century transportation system that enhances our economy, safeguards the environment and provides Rhode Islanders with healthy and affordable transportation choices.

Based on these priorities, Grow Smart objects to the Chafee Administration’s expansion of surface parking on the east lawn of the State House and its plan to convert an adjacent lot on Francis Street to yet more surface parking in the Capital Center.

Both of these actions would also appear to violate state law governing development in the Capital Center District (RIGL 45-24.4).

At a time when more people are turning to mass transit – nationally and locally – we need our leaders to more fully embrace and invest in 21st Century transportation infrastructure. There is a well-documented and established need for stabilizing and enhancing our well-used statewide mass transit system.

This is why we hope the Chafee Administration will change course and support well-vetted and responsible approaches to properly fund mass transit. Also appreciated would be a positive response to longstanding requests to site an architecturally appropriate bus shelter at the State House.

Grow Smart believes that our state’s leaders should focus on meeting the growing demand for transit use in order to realize its full economic development potential throughout the state.