Testimony in Favor of HB 1785:
"requiring mileage-based exit numbers on Tier I highways."

Rep. Timothy Horrigan; January 13, 2024

House Public Works Committee

HB 1785 would bring New Hampshire into line with almost every other state by numbering Interstate and freeway exits by mileage rather than sequentially. Mileage-based exit numbers have been mandated by the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices since 2009, and they have been commonplace nationwide since the 1980s. Our three next-door neighbors— Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont— switched to mileage based numbers in the last few years, with no dire consequences.

Our state periodically applies for a waiver from the federal Department of Transportation to continue using our non-standard exit signs. Those waivers have always been approved, but the application process is a waste of time and money. And, anyway, mileage-based exit numbers are better. Changing to mileage-based exit numbers it makes it easier for out-of-state motorists to get around, and in-state motorists will adjust quickly.

NH DOT has been considering an exit-renumbering project for a while. Project 40915 has been included in several drafts of the Ten-Year Highway Plan (TYP), though it has always been taken out by the Governor's Advisory Commission on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT). Governor Sununu was actively opposed to changing our state's exit numbers, for reasons I personally disagreed with. He is no longer the Governor, but Project 40915 also quietly vanished from this year's plan under Governor Ayotte's leadership.

There are several recent developments on our major highways which make this a good time to think about renumbering the exits. Firstly, we just built Exit 4A between Exits 4 and 5 on I-93. If we switch to mileage based exits, we will have Exits 12, 13 and 15 in Londonderry, which will be easier for drivers to figure out than 4, 4A and 5. Secondly, recent upgrades to the Spaulding Turnpike/NH-16 have eliminated Exits 2 and 5, and that road has never had an Exit 10. Thirdly, the mileposts on the freeway section of NH-101 east of I-93 have been changed. The mileposts now start at 60 in Manchester and go up to 92 in Hampton. They used to be 40 miles higher, running from 100 to 132. The exits are sequentially numbered from 1 to 13, with the two most important exits being un-numbered, i.e. the exits to I-95 and US 1.

In a preliminary draft of the current Ten-Year Highway Plan, the estimated cost of Project 40915 was $1,595,037, all of which would be federal dollars. The fiscal note gives a slightly higher cost of $2,274,000, 35% of which would be paid with Turnpike System rather than federal funds. Either way, this is in my opinion money well spent because it makes life easier for motorists.

I urge the Public Works committee to pass HB 1785, or alternatively to amend HB 2026 to include Project 40915, or both. The effective date of HB 1785 is 60 days after passage, but the exit numbers don't have to be changed until the calendar year 2038, which is outside the scope of HB 2026. 2038 will presumably be the tenth year covered two years from now in the plan outlined by HB 2028.

STATEWIDE (40581)

Route/Road STATEWIDE **Category** AIRPORT

Scope PRESERVATION, MODERNIZATION, AND/OR EXPANSION OF AIRPORT FACILITIES; PLANNING STUDIES. **Strategy** ALL TIERS

Phase	Year	Funding	Program
Other	2027	139,200	AIP
Other	2028	181,656	AIP
Other	2029	170,684	AIP
Other	2030	158,394	AIP
Other	2031	186,035	AIP
Other	2032	194,220	AIP
Other	2033	383,002	AIP
Other	2034	211,688	AIP
	Total	**$1,624,878**	

Previous Funding	**$800,000**
Current TYP Funding	**$1,624,878**
Future Funding Required	**$0**
Total Project Cost	**$2,424,878**

Comments None

STATEWIDE (40915)

Route/Road TIER 1 ROADWAYS **Category** ROADSIDE

Scope EXIT SIGN RENUMBERING ALONG TIER 1 HIGHWAYS TO COMPLY WITH MUTCD. **Strategy** TIER 1

Phase	Year	Funding	Program
Preliminary Engineering	2031	136,425	Federal-Aid Highway
Construction	2035	1,458,612	Federal-Aid Highway
	Total	**$1,595,037**	

Previous Funding	**$0**
Current TYP Funding	**$1,595,037**
Future Funding Required	**$0**
Total Project Cost	**$1,595,037**

Comments None

p. 2 of 2 (2nd page is an excerpt from an early 2027-2036 TYP draft)