

**Jo-Ann Ryan
Majority Leader
Councilwoman - Ward 5**



Contact:

Billy Kepner, Deputy Chief of Staff: Communications

O: 401-521-7477

M: 607-331-9806

bkepner@providenceri.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from City Council Majority Leader Jo-Ann Ryan on Dredging of Providence and Woonasquatucket Rivers:

Providence, RI (December 23, 2019)...Recently, numerous news outlets have reported that the dredging of the Providence and Woonasquatucket Rivers, a project which was to be finalized by Christmas, will go over budget by hundreds of thousands of dollars and will continue into January. The huge volume of trash and toxins being pulled from the rivers has caused costs to rise and scheduling delays. Amongst the piles of clothes and plastic, crews have also extracted over a dozen electric scooters and bicycles.

This serves as another reminder that these businesses skirted their contractual obligations to maintain the devices in their fleets. It is not the job of the City, State, or the Coastal Resources Management Council to contain and decommission these devices from our precious waterways. These companies, like any other companies who want to do business in the City of Providence, are expected to uphold their end of the bargain. The electric scooter and bicycle companies did not do that before leaving town and now the taxpayers are, quite literally, stuck cleaning up their mess.

Moving forward, the City needs to reconsider the types of agreements it enters into with electronic transportation device companies. From recent experiences, it appears that we are lacking a comprehensive regulatory framework to hold these companies accountable. This is why I am working on drafting an ordinance that codifies our expectations, houses operational and financial requirements, and puts businesses on notice with explicit penalties in the case of non-compliance.

I strongly support any measure that preserves our environment and natural resources; including making micro-mobility options more widely available for our visitors and residents. As a City, we must also do a better job sweeping our streets regularly and enforcing the plastic bag ordinance. When we don't enforce these environmentally-responsible measures across the board, we end up with the massive piles of garbage currently being pulled out of our rivers. We need to stop paying lip service and take all litter and contamination, from plastic bags to electric bicycles, more seriously if we are resolute on creating a more resilient City.

Jo-Ann Ryan, Majority Leader
Providence City Council
Councilwoman - Ward 5