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Sustainable Economic Growth
& Quality of Place

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April 6, 2021

House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House, Room 35
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H-6122, Article 1, Section 18 EXTENSION OF BONDS

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

On behalf of Grow Smart RI, I write in support of H-6122, Article 1, Section 18 to extend the termination date of the 2014 Mass Transit Hub Infrastructure Bond, but only with an amendment.

Our primary concern is RIDOT's proposed and wrongful use of bond funds that will undermine rather than improve the vital function of a central transit hub for thousands of daily riders. RIDOT's plan to scatter bus stops and transfer points across downtown Providence will make the system more difficult and time-consuming to use, disproportionately and negatively impacting people of color and lower-income Rhode Islanders getting to work, school and about their daily lives.

We believe there are suitable and widely vetted alternatives to improve the public space in Kennedy Plaza without sacrificing the vital benefits of a central transit hub where riders can make efficient and convenient connections and transfers and with access to traveler amenities such as public restrooms. RIDOT's deeply flawed plan was developed with no public input and not a single public hearing. To view a summary of objections to this plan, including a unanimous Resolution of opposition by the Providence City Council, click [here](#).

Suggested Amendment

Grow Smart RI respectfully proposes amending [Article 1, Section 18](#) by inserting the following two sentences beginning on line 6 as follows:

"Per the 2014 Mass Transit Hub Infrastructure Bond [ballot question](#), funds shall only be utilized to fund enhancements and renovations to transit hub infrastructures. No bond funds shall be utilized to dismantle or otherwise deconstruct the state's primary transit hub in Kennedy Plaza."

Doing so, we believe, will not only lead to a better outcome for attracting more Rhode Islanders to use mass transit and reducing carbon emissions, but will also restore voter confidence that bond referenda will be used for their stated purpose.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the proposed amendment.

John Flaherty
Deputy Director