

SAVE RIPTA

PVDStreets.org/Save-RIPTA

April 7, 2026

House Committee on Corporations
State House, House Lounge
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SUPPORT (H8127) - RIPTA Board Reform

Dear Chair Solomon and Committee members,

For decades, Rhode Island maintained a clear division of responsibility between its transportation and public transit agencies. RIDOT managed highways, bridges, and road infrastructure. RIPTA operated the state's public transit system – [primarily fixed-route bus service and door-to-door transportation for riders with disabilities](#) – and played a central role in statewide transit planning and [connections to rail and other modes](#). Coordination between the two agencies was imperfect, but the separation was intentional. Each had a defined mission, distinct leadership, and accountability aligned with its core purpose.

That separation was undone in 2023. This mistake was an action that we objected to at the time, and **we are writing today to undo this misguided attempt to provide oversight, which in practice led to devastating consequences for RIPTA.**

With RIDOT wielding a powerful leadership role at RIPTA, the agency was effectively subordinated to DOT, whose institutional mission, incentives, and culture are oriented toward roads and drivers, not toward moving people efficiently, equitably, and reliably through Rhode Island's cities and towns. During the navigation of the worst financial crisis RIPTA has faced in decades, at every turn, **RIDOT leadership refused to step up and defend RIPTA's current levels of service, not to mention any hope of expanding service.** The only public statements from RIDOT leadership throughout this period were those championing reduced service and increased fares. Rather than supporting public transit riders, the Director's sole mission was to defend RIDOT being impacted in any way by an agency with a fraction of the size of its budget.

The result? The most devastating service cuts in RIPTA's history.

The core failure is not who sits at the top of RIDOT, but how transit decisions are structured in Rhode Island – a framework the legislature fundamentally altered just a few years ago by restructuring RIPTA's board, with damaging results.

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With H8127, we can rectify this mistake, and ensure RIDOT's participation on the Board of RIPTA without holding a statutory leadership role. We can also strengthen the RIPTA Board by restructuring it to include direct representation from riders, transit operators, and community stakeholders, which this bill would also do.

As a transit rider and supporter, I am relying on you to support this simple solution for RIPTA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dylan Giles". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Dylan Giles
Operations Manager
Providence Streets Coalition