

Dear Chairman Abney and Committee members,

My name is Archana Ramanujam, I live in Providence and I am a member of Providence Streets Coalition. I am writing because we need to take action on the impending fiscal crisis facing RIPTA in the 2026 budget. I am therefore in support of Representative Morales' H5405. This act would allocate the current rideshare tax to fund RIPTA and ensure another sustainable funding stream in the future.

As you know the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority(RIPTA) is facing a deficit of \$32.6 million dollars in 2026. This is due to years of underfunding. RIPTA is an essential public service that tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders need to get to work, school and essential services. I use it myself to get to my workplace at least a few times a week, to go to health appointments, and to pick up a few things I need downtown or at the mall.

As a transit rider and supporter, I urge you to support this bill which will increase revenue for RIPTA by diverting sales tax taken on Uber and Lyft. These are forms of transport that are actively hurting public transit. Many of my colleagues use Uber and Lyft a lot; they can afford it. I have the same income as them, so I know they can also a) afford a surcharge, and b) use a nudge to use our state's public transit system more, such that RIPTA will serve a broader base of people. H5405 would achieve both. Securing new and diverse funding streams that do not rely on the federal government or declining gas tax revenue will help attain financial stability. It will also allow service to expand, meeting the needs of a growing population that requires access to the affordable and sustainable travel option that public transit provides.

I urge you to support H5405, to give public transit the funding it needs to expand service, attract new riders, and get working people where they need to go, affordably and safely.

Sincerely,
Archana Ramanujam
156 9th St