

Testimony in Support of RIPTA Funding Bills
To: Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee
From: Melannie Munera-Goez
Date: May 21, 2025
Re: Support for Legislation to Sustain and Strengthen RIPTA

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

As someone who relied on RIPTA as an undergraduate student commuting daily from Cumberland to North Kingstown, I know firsthand how essential public transit is for access to education, jobs, and opportunity. RIPTA made it possible for me to complete my degree without the cost and burden of owning a car. It was my connection to a better future—just as it is for thousands of Rhode Islanders today.

RIPTA now faces a \$32.6 million operational deficit for FY 2026, which would lead to devastating service cuts and mass layoffs if left unaddressed. The following bills represent thoughtful and urgent solutions to this crisis:

- **H6020 / S342 – \$32.6 Million Budget Allocation**
Closes RIPTA's FY26 deficit to prevent immediate service cuts and layoffs.
- **H5405 / S419 – Rideshare Sales Tax Reallocation**
Allocates the 7% sales tax from Uber and Lyft rides to RIPTA. Estimated revenue: \$10–\$15 million annually.
- **H5470 / S446 – Transit Master Plan Bond Referenda**
Proposes a \$100 million bond for capital improvements, including safer stops, updated technology, and infrastructure for high-capacity transit lines.
- **H5467 / S46 – Motor Fuel Tax: 30% Allocation to RIPTA**
Adjusts RIPTA's share of the gas tax back to 30%, aligning it with original intent and inflationary growth.
- **H5468 / S47 – Motor Fuel Tax: Two-Year Inflation Rate Adjustment**
Reforms how inflation is calculated for gas tax increases, ensuring RIPTA's funding keeps pace with real costs.

This legislation offers both short- and long-term strategies to secure reliable, sustainable funding for public transit in Rhode Island. Investing in RIPTA is an investment in our workforce, our environment, and the economic mobility of everyday Rhode Islanders.

I urge you to support this full legislative package. The future of transit—and the well-being of those who depend on it—is in your hands.

Sincerely,
Melannie Munera-Goez