

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable members of the Committee,

My name is Kenny Uong, I live in Providence, and I would like to express my support for Representative Stewart's H5467. This bill presents a key opportunity to close RIPTA's budget deficit by securing a more reliable and stable funding source for RIPTA.

RIPTA needs sustainable funding sources so that the agency can continue to connect communities and take riders where they need to go. As a family caregiver who relies on RIPTA for errands and travel during my caretaking breaks, I have experienced firsthand the importance of a reliable public transit system. Tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders depend on RIPTA for work, school, healthcare, and daily activities. We have already seen the consequences of financial shortfalls—last year's proposed service cuts due to operator shortages and budget constraints demonstrated how fragile the system is without sustainable funding.

H5467, in conjunction with H5468, could help close as much as \$7 million of RIPTA's \$32.5 million deficit, and establish a more stable funding foundation for the years ahead. As the gas tax is projected to decline in the coming years due to greater adoption of electric vehicles, we must ensure that it is correctly indexed to inflation, and that RIPTA is getting its fair share.

Currently, RIPTA receives approximately \$40 million annually from gasoline tax revenues, equating to only 24% of the total tax collected. Despite the overall gas tax increasing from 32.5 cents per gallon to 38 cents per gallon, RIPTA's fixed allocation of 9.75 cents per gallon has remained unchanged. If RIPTA's share had remained at its previous 30% level, the agency would be receiving an additional \$7 million annually. In addition, the current inflation adjustment is inadequate, as it occurs every two years but only adjusts for one year of inflation. Adding an additional penny per gallon next year could generate \$1.3 million in extra funding for RIPTA.

I strongly urge the House Finance Committee to support H5467, give RIPTA a fair share of the Motor Fuel tax, and support the riders who rely on the service. Without the necessary funds to address RIPTA's budget shortfall, the essential services it provides—such as access to employment, healthcare, and education—will be at risk. Failing to act now will have lasting negative consequences for generations to come.

Thank you,

Kenny Uong  
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