



Environment Council of Rhode Island

Re: Environment Council of Rhode Island supports H - 5468

From Peter Trafton of Providence, Testimony Supporting H - 5468

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, I write with strong support for House Bill 5468 by Rep Tanzi and colleagues.

ECRI recognizes the many environmental benefits provided by public mass transportation instead of individual car travel. Thus, we prioritize adequate funding and efficient management for RIPTA so that our state will benefit from greenhouse gas reduction, improved air quality, reduced energy consumption for travel, reduced traffic congestion, and promotion of smart growth and sustainable development. **Because RIPTA offers so many benefits, ECRI chose the Save RIPTA Package of 7 bills as one of our top four priorities for 2025. Rep. Tanzi's 5468 is part of that package.**

Gasoline tax revenue is adjusted regularly to keep up with inflation (CPI-U), but the process is poorly contrived. The adjustment is made every 2 years but only considers one year's inflation.

H - 5468 revises the current law so that the biennial inflation adjustment is based on the inflation that actually occurred during the *previous two years*. We estimate the bill would add 1-cent per gallon to next year's gasoline tax. This would increase RIPTA's support by approximately \$1.3 million. Combined with H-5467, these gas tax corrections would significantly help to fill RIPTA's current funding gap and provide ongoing support for the future.

ECRI hopes that you will consider the combined benefit of H5467 & H5468 and advance both to a vote in the House and passage this year. Adequate public transit is a necessary part of Rhode Island's future. A fully funded RIPTA with expanded service will provide convenient, less expensive and environmentally responsible transportation for years to come.

We urge the Committee to approve H - 5468 (as well as H - 5467) and move them on to floor votes.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PG Trafton".

Peter Trafton, MD

Co-VP of Policy, Environment Council of Rhode Island