



# Environment Council of Rhode Island

**Re: Environment Council of Rhode Island supports H-5470**

**From Peter Trafton of Providence, Testimony supporting H-5470**

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, I write with the strongest possible support for H-5470, Rep Tanzi's request for the Bond Referenda of 2026.

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 H 5470 is part of that package.**

The Bill's request is to include issue of \$100,000,000 in general obligation bonds to provide direct funding for a statewide public transit system. It specifies essential necessary elements of infrastructure to accomplish this goal (P.1, Lines 11 – 18).

Beyond essential funding to keep RIPTA alive and functioning, we need to provide Rhode Island with transportation for our future. It will require this level of investment, and its benefits will be commensurate.

I was living in San Francisco when BART, the Bay Area Rapid Transit System, opened in 1972. I lived and traveled with it until moving to Rhode Island in 1984. I continue to use BART whenever we return to the Bay Area. The positive impact that it has contributed is simply outstanding. Similar transportation in Rhode Island would bring our state into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, un-crowd our streets and clear our air.

ECRI urges you and this committee to add H-5470, Transit Forward RI 2040, to the 2026 Bond Referenda. It will open our way to the future.

Thanks very much 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