



RIEEA

Rhode Island Environmental
Education Association

10 Davol Square, Suite 100
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
RIEEA.org

Jeanine Silversmith

On Behalf of the Rhode Island Environmental Education Association

In Support H-6020, \$32.6MILLION BUDGET ALLOCATION

House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

The Rhode Island Environmental Education Association (RIEEA) supports **H-6020**, and respectfully urges its passage. RIPTA is facing a deficit of \$32.6 million dollars, this deficit is caused from years of underfunding and undervaluing our vital transit system that Rhode Islanders need. This funding would support public access to outdoor spaces such as parks, the shoreline, forests, farms, and more.

RIEEA stands in strong support of environmental justice, ensuring that every Rhode Islander enjoys access to clean, welcoming outdoor places to play, work, and learn. Time in nature provides opportunity for physical activity, critical and creative thinking, interaction with and connection to community members, and so much more. Research¹ shows that unstructured play and interaction with the natural world are important for healthy development in children as well as the physical, mental, and social and emotional health of both children and adults. We also know that those of us who have access to outdoor spaces are more likely to be engaged in protecting those spaces and feel less anxiety about the climate crisis and environmental concerns than those who do not have such access.

The RIEEA membership includes over 400 individuals including educators, scientists, advocates, students, and parents, as well as 69 organizations² who care deeply about Rhode Island's natural places, health, and environmental and economic stability. **Pass H-6020, and address RIPTA's \$32.6M budget shortfall.**

¹ <https://research.childrenandnature.org/>

² <https://www.rieea.org/about-us/organizational-members/>