



50 Sims Avenue, Space 209
Providence, RI 02909
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May 20, 2025

Chairman Marvin Abney
House Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support of RIPTA 2026 Budget & House Bill 6020 - Joint Resolution for Appropriation of \$32,594,799 to RIPTA to continue services

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee:

The Rhode Island Land Trust Council (the Council) is the coalition of the state's 50+ land trusts, which are community-based organizations that protect and steward Rhode Island's open spaces, farms, forestland, and historic sites for the public's benefit. Our organization is dedicated to ensuring that every Rhode Islander has access to clean air, clean water, open spaces for recreation, and healthy food. These values are inextricably linked to a well-funded public transportation system, which plays a vital role in shaping our communities and connecting those communities to our state's important lands.

Reliable public transit connects people to jobs, schools, healthcare, and outdoor spaces, reducing our reliance on cars and decreasing traffic congestion and emissions.

Unfortunately, years of underfunding and underinvestment have put RIPTA in a dire situation. The agency faces a \$32.6 million budget deficit, and without full funding, we will see job losses, route cuts, and a decline in service. This would be devastating for the many Rhode Islanders who depend on RIPTA daily—especially those without other transportation options.

While we support the current RIPTA budget article, it is clear that it does not go nearly far enough. We need to treat RIPTA as the essential service it is and secure long-term, sustainable funding to ensure it thrives. Investing in public transit is not just about mobility; it's about equity, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and smart land use. It's about ensuring that all Rhode Islanders—regardless of income, age, or ability—have the ability to get where they need to go safely, affordably, and efficiently.

Public transit is tied to everything. Walkable communities, affordable housing, and conservation efforts all depend on a robust and accessible transit system. If we fail to fully fund RIPTA, we are not just cutting bus routes—we are diminishing opportunities, harming our environment, and making Rhode Island less livable for everyone.

I urge you to fully fund RIPTA and commit to a long-term vision that recognizes public transit as the backbone of a thriving, sustainable, and equitable Rhode Island. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Sayles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Kate Sayles, Director