



## Environment Council of Rhode Island

**Re: Environment Council of Rhode Island supports H-6020**  
**From Peter Trafton of Providence, Testimony supporting H-6020**

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, I write with strong support for House Bill 6020 by Rep. Alzate 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. Alzate's H-6020 is part of that package.**

As presently proposed, the Governor's 2026 budget leaves a \$32,594,799 operating deficit for RIPTA. For years, during many administrations, Rhode Island has consistently failed to provide the level of funding per person for public transportation that other states do. It is no surprise that RIPTA is struggling with insufficient funding. To maintain adequate service, more bus operators will need to be hired and trained and paid competitive wages, to match our cost-of-living and pay scales of adjacent states.

The \$32.6 million deficit, left uncorrected, will result in significant curtailment of RIPTA's services. Routes and hours of service will be diminished. Workers will be fired. Many Rhode Islanders will lose the way they get to work, to school, to healthcare - wherever they need to go.

Loss of RIPTA's essential services would be truly catastrophic.

ECRI urges you to pass H-6020, to provide essential public transportation for our state, and to develop RIPTA into the system we will need to replace our fossil fuel economy with renewable energy.

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