



Representative Marvin Abney, Chair

House Finance Committee

Rhode Island House of Representatives

May 21st, 2025

RE: Green Energy Consumers Alliance Supports House Bill 6020

Dear Chair Abney and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Green Energy Consumers Alliance and our thousands of members across Rhode Island, **I write in strong support of House Bill 6020**, which would fill the operating deficit currently in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget through a \$32.6 million budget allocation.

The Importance of Funding Public Transportation

Thousands of Rhode Islanders take the RIPTA to work, school, or appointments. By leaving a \$32.6 million shortfall in place, RIPTA is facing service cuts and potential staff layoffs which will be devastating for RIPTA riders and employees. A fully funded public transit system is critical for supporting higher density housing, recruiting and retaining residents, and meeting state climate goals. By leaving this deficit in place, each of those essential benefits is at risk.

It is important to note that the RIPTA Paratransit Program that provides door-to-door service for eligible riders is tied to existing, fixed RIPTA routes, and ride requests must be within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of an existing, fixed RIPTA route. If the RIPTA budget shortfall is not addressed and service cuts are imposed, current paratransit riders may lose their ability to access that door-to-door service and may face constrained mobility.

Public Transit and Rhode Island's Climate Goals

Transportation is the largest source of Rhode Island's state greenhouse gas emissions, contributing an estimated 36% to overall emissions. Reliable access to public transportation can reduce vehicle miles traveled by passenger vehicles, especially important as many trips in Rhode Island are made with only one passenger per vehicle. Appropriating \$32.6 million to RIPTA will allow riders that rely on RIPTA for their daily commute or to access healthcare, school, and other needs, to continue to do so, without increasing individual passenger vehicle trips. Fully funding public transportation will be important for the state to begin reducing emissions in the transportation sector prior to the electrification of transit.

Conclusion

To ensure RIPTA is fully funded and can maintain current operational levels, an appropriation of \$32.6 million is necessary. Green Energy Consumers Alliance thanks Representative Alzate for introducing this important legislation and urges the Committee and full General Assembly to vote in favor of its passage.

Sincerely,

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