

Dear House Finance Committee

This is Barry Schiller wrting for RI Transit Riders in support of billl H6096.

For over 10 years there have been proposals to move the state's main bus hub out of Kennedy Plaza, and the cost of these proposals has gotten higher and higher. There does not seem to be funding available to make the relocation work. Rhode Island Transit Riders is not definitively opposed to the idea of moving the bus hub, but we have always said that it should happen only if it will actually improve the state's transit system, and we have not seen any version of the project that actually would be an improvement.

H6096 does not close the door to relocating the bus hub, but it does require RIPTA to exercise its option to terminate the current contract with Next Wave, a contract which was supposed to cover robust public engagement followed by initial design for a new hub. We have not seen enough public engagement, and there has been no serious effort in this contract to decide whether relocating the hub is even better than staying in Kennedy Plaza. Kennedy Plaza could be fixed and improved at a much lower cost than moving the whole hub to a new location. Our assessment at the present time is that Rhode Island would be better off if RIPTA did not spend money on the remainder of this contract. There are better uses for public transit funds. Accordingly, we support this bill.

Barry Schiller, for RI Transit Riders

cc Amy Glidden, Co-chair RI Transit Riders