



March 10, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chair, House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

RE: H7127 RIPTA

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of NEARI, I write in strong support of fully funding RIPTA. As a union representing 12,000 members across Rhode Island, including educators, staff, and retirees, NEARI believes strongly that public transportation is vital to our communities.

Our core belief is that every Rhode Islander deserves quality public education, from pre-k through college. That is not achievable without strong public transportation. Many students, especially in higher education, rely on RIPTA to get to class. Many educators and staff at institutions such as URI, CCRI, RISD, and Roger Williams take the bus to work. High school students around the state, especially at schools like the Met, rely on RIPTA to get to their internships.

Failing to fully fund RIPTA negatively impacts Rhode Islanders of all walks of life, and students will be hit especially hard. Many students struggle to afford to live in Rhode Island already. Those who can't afford cars rely on RIPTA to get to work and class.

For example, the 64 route, which was cut back last year, is how many students and staff get to URI's Bay Campus, where they do important research that contributes to the blue economy and scientific progress. Graduate Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants who keep URI running rely on this route to get to work, and URI cannot run without them. Equally as important, the 69 route is necessary for many students who reside in Narragansett and South Kingstown and commute campus in Kingston, or to the Providence campus. When these routes are cut, that deprives these students of educational opportunities.

RIPTA is also vital to the wider community. When routes are cut, commute times increase. That means parents have less time to stay with and care for their children. If a cut to RIPTA adds an extra hour commute time to a parent, more household responsibilities fall on our students, which adds to their stress and impacts their education.

A fully-funded RIPTA would be a huge boon for our state and our economy. A convenient, excellent public transportation system improves quality of life, reduces traffic and congestion, and ensures working people and students can get around affordably.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support the RIPTA budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexander Lucini".

Alexander Lucini  
Government Relations Director, NEARI