

Dear Chair Cortvriend and Committee members,

My name is Eric Harrison and I live in Lincoln. I am writing in support of Bill H7127 funding the RIPTA budget and urging you to support the restoration of funding for RIPTA by undoing the service cuts. I have been riding RIPTA since I was a teenager when it was my connection to a social life. I have continued riding RIPTA into my adult life whenever I can. Unfortunately, due to the drastic cuts implemented last fall, the opportunities to use RIPTA in my daily life are few and far between. My local route, the 75, lost all its weekend service so I now have to walk twice as far to get the 71 or 72, both of which have also lost frequency with these cuts. I try to drive as little as possible, both for climate reasons and because I just don't like driving. If these cuts are not reversed, I can't see myself staying in Rhode Island long term, which is a shocking thing for me to say. As much as I love this state, I won't be locked into living in a place that forces me to drive everywhere.

As a rider and supporter of public transportation, I urge you to pass this bill to maintain funding for RIPTA at its current reduced service level and to commit to increased funding to restore the devastating cuts made in 2025. In a state as small and dense as ours, Rhode Island should be a leader in safe and reliable public transit. Instead, we are forced to write and testify session after session to keep this vital resource from dying altogether. Rhode Island can and must do better. It's time to stop managing decline and start rebuilding our transit system.

I implore you to support RIPTA funding in the Governor's budget and H7127, and to fight for the restoration of funding that led to devastating service cuts this fall. Fully funding RIPTA is a smart investment: it gives working Rhode Islanders reliable, affordable transportation, strengthens our economy by connecting people to jobs and services, and reduces traffic and carbon emissions. Study after study shows that every dollar invested in transit is returned many times over as economic gain. Rhode Island cannot build a 21st-century economy with a shrinking transit system. Please support this investment and put our state back on track.

Please, support H7127, and then increase funding for RIPTA.

Respectfully,

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