

Trafton testimony supporting H7127 budget allocation for RIPTA's \$13.8 million budget deficit, with increase. House Finance Committee Mar 10, 2026.

Dear Chair Cortvriend and Honorable members of the Committee,

I'm Peter Trafton of Providence Rhode Island, writing in support of H7127's allocation that addresses RIPTA's deficit.

I moved to Rhode Island from San Francisco with my family in 1984 and am now retired from my career as a surgeon and medical educator. I'm fortunate to be able to walk to many of my usual destinations in Providence and personally use RIPTA only occasionally. I treasure its presence and am acutely aware that a good number of Rhode Islanders depend upon public transit daily, for access to work, schools, essential shopping, medical care, and recreation. Unfortunately, our state has chosen to limit support for public transit, paying far less than most other states with similar geography, population, and needs. Far too little has been done to increase the availability and efficiency of RIPTA, self-defeatingly ensuring that it is a less popular choice than it might otherwise be. Thus, our roads are crowded with automobiles carrying, most typically, a single person. Regrettably, our DOT policies have suggested that widening roads are the answer. I have lived in other cities and have seen transit work. I've talked with older local folk who grew up in Providence when it had such a transit system. Further, the economics of public transit are quite beneficial for the cities that have appropriate and effective systems.

So, we have ended up with awkwardly widened roads, filled with automobiles that pollute, threaten the health, and emit overbearing amounts of greenhouse gases. To change towards a future as good as it should be, we must provide a public transit system that can attract and support customers, our fellow citizens. We will never reach the goals of the Act on Climate without effective public transit.

Thus, I ask you to support the FY2027 budget's funding of RIPTA, including \$13.8 million as proposed by the Governor in H7127, and urge that you support representative Alzate's H8256 to increase the funding by another \$5 million which would return RIPTA's staffing and function to the levels cut in September 2025.

Thanks very much for considering my input.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PTrafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Peter Trafton, MD