



Grow Smart RI
Sustainable Economic Growth
& Quality of Place

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April 13, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Committee on Finance
VIA EMAIL - HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: Support for H-8145 (Sales & Use Taxes – Restricted Receipts Account for Transit)

Dear Chair Abney and honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Grow Smart RI, I write in full support for H-8145, and we thank Representative Alzate for introducing it.

Grow Smart RI is Rhode Island's statewide smart growth advocacy organization. We represent a big-tent coalition of business and civic leaders along with community stakeholders committed to strengthening and growing Rhode Island's economy in a sustainable and equitable way. We work with community partners across the state to integrate smart land use, transportation and housing policies in a way that uses resources most efficiently and that creates vibrant and opportunity rich places for all to thrive.

As many know, for decades RIPTA's revenue has not kept pace with the inflationary pressure on its expenses, despite RIPTA's time and again *demonstrated* efficiency. And while the Governor's proposed FY27 State Budget would close RIPTA's projected deficit for FY27, it does not restore the sweeping and damaging service cuts that took effect last September due to insufficient funding, despite the earnest and appreciated efforts of the General Assembly to avoid such cuts.

With the General Assembly's requirement that RIPTA expand the RIde paratransit program statewide, beyond ADA service area requirements, it is important to manage capacity and strengthen controls around program participation to protect the system's intended users. Without additional funding for RIde anywhere, RIPTA may be forced to make eligibility more strict, depriving many Rhode Islanders of access to this critical service.

This bill and the full package of bills before you this evening would put Rhode Island on a path that many other states and metro regions have chosen – to invest in achieving the benefits of a data-driven and state-adopted blueprint for improving transit - increased ridership, affordability, more transit-oriented housing development, economic growth and progress in meeting the state's Act on Climate requirements.

We urge your approval of this measure.

Thank you,

John Flaherty
Senior Advisor and Special Projects