

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee

I write in strong support of H 8178.

My name is Judith A. Byrnes, and I live in District 68, Bristol RI, Rep. Speakman's district.

It is inexcusable that we are still funding transportation like it's the 1950's. RI cannot compete economically or in any other way, without a robust public transportation system.

In comparison to federal standards, Rhode Island's Highway Maintenance Account (HMA) shortchanges RIPTA. An 80/20 split for surface transportation funding between highways and mass transit has been the standard in Congress since 1982, yet Rhode Island practices a 90/10 split. RIPTA needs a larger and more predictable state funding source in order to thrive.

As a transit rider and supporter, I am relying on you to support this simple solution for increasing revenue and ridership for RIPTA. Securing funding streams that do not rely on the federal government or declining gas tax revenue will not only achieve financial stability, but allow for the expansion of service to meet the needs of a growing population that requires access to the affordable and sustainable travel option that public transit provides.

I urge you to support Representative Cortvriend's H8178 to increase revenue for RIPTA, giving Rhode Island residents better access to affordable transportation and providing sustainable funding for public transit to thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Byrnes

Bristol, RI

13 April 2026

