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April 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairperson
House Finance Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2026 H 8178 – AN ACT RELATING PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS- TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT AND DEBT REDUCTION ACT OF 2011

Dear Chairman Abney:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide context regarding H 8178. The bill would amend the Transportation Investment and Debt Reduction Act of 2011 to direct 20% of Rhode Island Highway Maintenance Account (HMA) proceeds to RIPTA. The HMA is a foundational funding source for RIDOT's capital program, including the required state match for federally funded transportation projects. Because federal transportation funding typically operates on an 80/20 cost-share basis, a reallocation of this magnitude would warrant careful analysis to fully assess potential impacts on project delivery, debt obligations, and the state's ability to leverage federal dollars. Any further changes to the HMA would require an analysis of potential impacts on transportation projects.

Governor McKee's FY 2027 budget proposal directly addresses RIPTA's projected \$13.8 million operating shortfall through a multi-part strategy: a \$9.3 million annual increase in the base share of HMA revenue allocated to RIPTA for operating support, \$3.5 million in Rhode Island Capital Plan Funds for bus purchases, and \$1.0 million in additional cruise operator fees. The Governor's approach is designed to meet RIPTA's funding needs while preserving the structural integrity of the HMA and RIDOT's capital program. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and remain available to provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

Robert Rocchio, P.E.
Interim Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair

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cc: The Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee
The Honorable Terri Cortvriend
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel