

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** will masse <willmasse@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026 8:59 AM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Sen. LaMountain, Matthew L.; Rep. McNamara, Joseph M.  
**Subject:** SUPPORT (H8178) - Highway Maintenance Account Increase

**Categories:** Red category

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is William Masse, I live in Warwick, Rhode Island, and I am writing in support of Bill H8178.

Public transit is essential to my daily life. I rely on RIPTA to commute from Warwick to Providence most days using Route 4, and the recent service cuts have made that commute much more difficult. Buses run less frequently now, which means longer wait times and less reliability. I often have to leave earlier than necessary just to make sure I'm not late, and even then delays can still impact my workday. Reliable transit is not a convenience for me—it's how I get to work.

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.

The 2025 operational efficiency study mandated by the General Assembly found that RIPTA is highly efficient and operating in line with peer agencies. In contrast, RIDOT ranks 30th in the nation for cost per lane mile, behind the rest of New England. Given this, it makes sense to invest more in RIPTA, which has demonstrated strong performance, and ensure it has the funding needed to provide reliable service.

RIPTA's primary source of state funding, the gas tax, is projected to decline as more people switch to electric vehicles. At the same time, Rhode Island is working to meet its Act on Climate goals and transition away from fossil fuels and foreign oil. Without a stable and predictable funding source like an increased share of the Highway Maintenance Account, RIPTA cannot be financially sustainable, and service will continue to suffer.

As a transit rider, I am relying on you to support this straightforward solution. Investing in RIPTA will improve reliability, expand access to jobs and services, reduce congestion, and support a more sustainable transportation system for our state.

I urge you to support Representative Cortvriend's H8178 to increase revenue for RIPTA and ensure that Rhode Island residents have access to affordable, dependable public transportation.

Sincerely,  
William Masse  
Warwick, Rhode Island