



more, better & safer bicycling

April 13, 2026

To: Chair Marvin Abney and members of the House Finance Committee

Bari Freeman
Executive Director

Re: Support for Revenue for Rhode Island Public Transit Authority:
H8317, H8178, H8145, H8202, H8369, H8325.

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Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

Representing Bike Newport, I write in support of these bills that would restore funding to RIPTA, reversing the devastating 2025 cuts to service and providing resources to fund the 2020 RI Transit Master Plan: Transit Forward RI.

Public transit is in crisis in Rhode Island. Since the 2025 cuts to service, ridership is down 12.1% systemwide. The loss of riders has increased the cost of each remaining passenger on RIPTA by nearly 30%.

The 2020 Rhode Island Transit Master Plan states, "The most important driver of transit ridership is how frequently the bus comes." "[For workers] with non-traditional hours, more service needs to operate for longer hours." Six years into the plan, we are moving backwards, both in bus frequency and operating hours. Interviews, surveys, and testimonies collected and elevated by our state's transit advocates provide the consistent confirmation that the state's 2025 cuts to service are proving personally and professionally traumatic for those who rely on the bus - here on Aquidneck Island and in communities across the state.

The results in use devastate the system as well - Service cuts to route 60 (Providence to Newport-East Bay) reduced ridership by 27% from November 2024 to November 2025, and the cuts to 24L express (Providence-Fall River-Newport) resulted in a drop of 52% of its riders.

Public transit is a crucial part of our multimodal transportation system. A healthy transit system provides vital transportation options so that everyone can get where they need to go safely, dependably, and economically. Healthy transit directly reduces the need and number of motor vehicles, contributing to slower safer streets for all.

Bills H8317, H8178, H8145, H8202, H8369, and H8325, individually and collectively provide necessary revenue to advance Rhode Island's Transit Master Plan: Transit Forward RI, adopted in 2020, and we urge their adoption.

Sincerely,

Bari Freeman, Executive Director