



*Via Electronic Mail*

April 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney  
Chair, House Committee on Finance  
Room 35, State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: CLF **Supports** House Bill No. 8202 – Bonds Relating to Capital Development Program

Dear Chair Abney:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 8202, which would place a ballot question before voters in November authorizing the state to issue \$100 million in bonds to support implementation of the state's Transit Master Plan (“TMP”). We offer our enthusiastic support for this bill.

CLF is a member-supported non-profit advocacy organization working to protect public health and the environment and build healthy communities in Rhode Island and throughout New England. CLF supports policies that increase public transportation services and ridership and help to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reduction mandates of the Act on Climate.

H-8202 is a necessary course correction which would give Rhode Islanders the option of funding the implementation of the TMP, also known as Transit Forward RI 2040, which would increase ridership and decrease carbon emissions.<sup>1</sup> This plan goes hand-in-hand with proposals to fund the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (“RIPTA”) at an adequate level.

The TMP makes five broad recommendations to increase RIPTA ridership, which is needed to lower the number of personal carbon-producing vehicles on Rhode Island’s roads:

- Improve Existing Services
- Expand Services to New Areas
- Develop High-Capacity Transit
- Improve Access to Transit
- Make Service Easier to Use

According to Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management’s published Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, Rhode Island’s transportation sector accounts for over a third of Rhode

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<sup>1</sup> *Transit Forward RI 2040* - Rhode Island Transit Master Plan: <https://www.ripta.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/TFRI-Recs-Briefing-Book-Final-201230.pdf>.

Island's greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>2</sup> That is untenable. The Act on Climate mandates that Rhode Island achieve greenhouse gas emissions of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, 80% by 2040, and net-zero emissions by 2050.<sup>3</sup>

These targets can only be achieved by substantially reducing the number of personal carbon-producing vehicles on Rhode Island's roads. One of the best tools in Rhode Island's toolbox to meet this target is to substantially increase RIPTA ridership by providing transportation alternatives that are accessible to all Rhode Islanders. RIPTA is already relied on by low-income communities, people with disabilities, and the elderly, making bus lines lifelines for Rhode Islanders without cars. Thriving public transit is also a key element of economic development, enticing companies, development, and jobs.

I regularly ride RIPTA, and I know there is ample opportunity to improve services and make RIPTA a viable alternative to driving. Aspects like increasing bus frequency and improving bus shelters would aid existing riders while attracting new ones. The TMP is a visionary and data-driven plan that has already been vetted by the public and adopted by the state.

It is critical that the General Assembly add this project to the ballot this fall and properly serve the public by ensuring our public transit system is convenient, equitable, and connected. We therefore ask that you support House Bill No. 8202.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Erin Ritter  
Program Coordinator, Rhode Island  
Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the House Committee on Finance  
Representative José F. Batista  
Representative Evan P. Shanley  
Representative Jennifer Stewart  
Representative Rebecca Kislak  
Representative Cherie L. Cruz  
Representative Arthur Handy  
Representative Edith Ajello  
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation

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<sup>2</sup> *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Survey – Quick Facts*: <https://dem.ri.gov/environmental-protection-bureau/air-resources/greenhouse-gas-emissions-inventory>.

<sup>3</sup> R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-6.2-9.