



LOCAL DIVISION 618
AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION, AFL-CIO-CLC
HEADQUARTERS

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Dear Chair Abney and Committee members,

My name is **Walter Melillo President, Business Agent, ATU Local 618**, I live in **Cranston**], and I am writing in support of Representative Tanzi's Transit Master Plan Bond Bill H8202.

I represent approximately **700 employees and members** of the **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority**. Our objective is to enhance RIPTA's operations by implementing innovative technologies and integrating advanced systems, thereby improving reliability and service quality for both riders and staff.

This bond for \$100 million in capital funding for RIPTA would finally make progress towards implementation of the visionary [Transit Master Plan](#) (TMP) adopted by the state in 2020 and help build a more convenient, accessible, safe, and reliable public transit system in Rhode Island.

As it stands today, most RIPTA trips are not competitive with driving because the bus is stuck in traffic and has to make many stops. This bond would fund the construction of rapid bus routes across the state identified in the TMP, like the planned [Metro Connector](#) project, that would drastically speed up transit travel times for transit riders. This would attract new ridership and meet our Act on Climate goals by funding the infrastructure needed to improve our public transportation system here in Rhode Island.

This bond would also provide direct funding for desperately needed improvements for current RIPTA riders. This includes improvements to bus stops and shelters; safer pedestrian access to bus stops including crosswalks, sidewalks, and curb ramps; and better passenger facilities at current bus hubs including bathrooms, sheltered and secured bike racks, and indoor waiting areas.

I urge you to support H8202, to give public transit in Rhode Island the generational investment it needs to become a high-quality, 21st Century system that current and future residents and visitors can rely on.

Sincerely,



Walter Melillo

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President, Business Agent, ATU Local 618