

Chris O'Brien

From: Lisa Aurecchia <lisa@wrwc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 9:45 AM
To: House Finance Committee
Cc: Alicia Lehrer; Rebekah Greenwald; Tyler Sylvester
Subject: H-8298

Categories: Green category

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Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, I am writing to express our strong support for **H-8298** and to thank Representative Tanzi for introducing this \$25 million bond referendum proposal. This funding is essential to advancing Rhode Island's Bicycle Mobility Plan and ensuring continued progress on critical projects like the expansion of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway.

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council is a community-based organization dedicated to restoring and revitalizing the Woonasquatucket River and its surrounding neighborhoods. A cornerstone of our work is the development and expansion of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway—a multi-use path that provides safe, accessible, and equitable transportation and recreation opportunities for residents in Providence and communities across the Northwest region of the state.

The Greenway has already demonstrated transformative impacts. It connects neighborhoods, supports local businesses, provides safe routes for walking and biking, and contributes to improved public health and environmental outcomes. However, significant gaps remain, and continued expansion is critical to realizing a fully connected network. Without additional funding, progress will stall, delaying benefits to the communities we serve.

H-8298 represents a vital opportunity to secure the resources needed to continue this work. As of the December 2025 publication of Rhode Island's Long-Range Transportation Plan, **only 1.7% of the 2020 Bicycle Mobility Plan has been implemented, which pales in comparison to our neighboring states.** This bond would provide essential state matching funds, potentially leveraging up to \$125 million in additional federal investment to complete projects like the Greenway and create good-paying jobs.

Investing in the expansion of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway is an investment in equitable access, environmental restoration, economic development, and climate resilience. It will help reduce traffic congestion, lower emissions, and provide safe, affordable transportation options for residents of all ages and abilities.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support H-8298 and help ensure that projects like the Woonasquatucket River Greenway can continue to grow and serve Rhode Islanders for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration and your leadership.

Sincerely,

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Lisa Aurecchia

Director of Projects

Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

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