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Sustainable Economic Growth  
& Quality of Place

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April 13, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
VIA EMAIL - [HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)

Re: Support for H-8317 (Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$5M to RIPTA)

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Grow Smart RI, I write in full support for H-8317, a Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$5 million to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority.

Grow Smart RI is Rhode Island's statewide smart growth advocacy organization. We represent a big-tent coalition of business and civic leaders along with community stakeholders committed to strengthening and growing Rhode Island's economy in a sustainable and equitable way. We work with community partners across the state to integrate smart land use, transportation and housing policies in a way that uses resources most efficiently and that creates vibrant and opportunity rich places for all to thrive.

As many know, for decades RIPTA's revenue has not kept pace with the inflationary pressure on its expenses, despite RIPTA's time and again *demonstrated* efficiency. And while the Governor's proposed FY27 State Budget would close RIPTA's projected deficit for FY27, it does not restore the sweeping and damaging service cuts that took effect last September due to insufficient funding, despite the earnest and appreciated efforts of the General Assembly to avoid such cuts.

Approval of this Resolution would restore the service that was cut last fall.

By now, many have become aware of the severity of damage and the cost to so many individuals, businesses and our communities, as outlined in the [2025 Service Cuts Impact Report](#). The report documented that ridership has dropped 12.1% or about 125,000 trips, that 30% of RIPTA riders are at risk of losing employment, that 8% lost pay, and that 3.6% lost their jobs directly. And, it has increased by 29% the cost to operate RIPTA per service hour. This has been a Lose-Lose proposition.

The package of bills before you this evening would put Rhode Island on a path that many other states and metro regions have chosen – to invest in achieving the benefits of a data-driven and state-adopted blueprint for improving transit - increased ridership, affordability, more transit-oriented housing development, economic growth and progress in meeting the state's Act on Climate requirements.

We urge your approval of this measure.

Thank you,

John Flaherty  
Senior Advisor and Special Projects