

Trafton testimony in behalf of the Environment Council of Rhode Island supporting H8317 for House Finance Committee April 14, 2026.

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

I'm Peter Trafton from Providence, co-chair of policy for the Environment Council of Rhode Island (ECRI) writing in strongest support of 8317 by Rep Alzate and colleagues to provide a \$5 million budget allocation to RIPTA to help restore the functionalities lost as a result of the 2026 budget's failure to provide funds enough to prevent curtailment of services.

This bill is one component of this year's **Save RIPTA** package created by a coalition of the same name. The package has been identified by ECRI as one of our four top priority pieces of legislation for the current session. We thus urge you and your committee to approve the bill and move it forward to the house with a recommendation for passage.

As you are aware, RIPTA has been chronically underfunded compared with its needs and public transit funds provided by other states. Last year's underfunding led to significant reduction of service with serious impact on the needs of Rhode Island's transit customers.

Public transit is a significant requirement for the people of Rhode Island. Cars for personal transportation are our greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions and health-threatening pollution. They are also very costly, more than in near-by states, for their owners and drivers. Without public transit, necessary travel is unaffordable for many. With inadequate public transit, there is no alternative. To address our state's transportation needs we must transition from automobiles to buses. This will require a transit system that is sustainably funded, with ability to meet the public's needs. Please help us get there by supporting H8317, as well as the entire Save RIPTA package.

Thanks very much for considering my comments in ECRI's behalf.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PTrafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the "P" and "T" being particularly prominent.

Peter Trafton