

Dear House Committee on Labor

I am writing to support bill H5304 for a commuter transportation benefit whereby large employers will have to offer pre-tax transit passes to employees. (just as employees do not have to report parking benefits provided by their employer or pay taxes on that benefit)

This won't solve RIPTA's deficit, but it both starts a process that over time could lead to higher ridership and revenue at RIPTA, and, it can change the culture so that more employees see transit as legitimate option for commuting thanks to a provision mandating RIDOT and DOLT conduct a public awareness campaign about the benefit. And it doesn't touch the General Fund or add any new taxes!

We all benefit if the transit passes catch on, including employers who can benefit from reduced parking demand, employees who might save some of the high cost of car ownership, and the public with cleaner air, reduced congestion, and enhanced safety.

I thank the sponsors of this bill.

Barry Schiller

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