

Chair Corvese and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Valerie Reishuk and I reside at 430 Morris Avenue, Providence, RI 02906. I support H5304 The Commuter Transportation Benefits Act.

One of the best ways to encourage sustainable public transit in our state is to encourage ridership. The state doesn't have a lot of levers to pull to increase ridership, but a commuter fringe benefit is perfect! This fringe benefit entices a large group of Rhode Island workers to carry RIPTA WAVE cards, and to join our growing ridership.

When I moved to Rhode Island in 2016, my employer (Hinckley Allen Law) issued me a RIPTA ECO Pass account. This was tremendously helpful, because I am car-free. In the beginning, I was renting Zip Cars for short trips and walking to work. But I soon increased my RIPTA ridership and started using RIPTA for rainy-day work commutes, grocery shopping trips, and excursions to other spots in the state.

I found the employer benefit easy to use. Accounting would put a monthly RIPTA bill on my desk, and I would sign it to request payroll deduction of the balance owed.

Strong public transit ridership is a bulwark in a storm and a smart investment. Families (and students) can economize on transportation. Residents who lose access to car ownership can switch to public transit. When the interstate highway is blocked, the state can provide alternative transport for workers with existing transit routes. Moving 50 people in a low-emissions bus helps us meet climate goals.

Please pass H5304 out of committee and to the House floor with a recommendation to vote yes.

Thank you,
Val Reishuk
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