

SAVE RIPTA

April 2nd, 2026

Senate Committee on Finance

State House

Providence, RI 02903

RE: SUPPORT (H7127) - \$13.8 million Budget Allocation for RIPTA deficit

Dear Chair DiPalma and Committee members,

I am writing today on behalf of the Save RIPTA Coalition to express my strong support for the \$13.8M allocation in Governor McKee's 2027 budget, and urge this committee to support increased funding for RIPTA to undo the devastating service cuts from the fall of 2025. RIPTA is a critical part of Rhode Island's transportation system, connecting individuals across the state with economic opportunities, education, and vital services.

Rhode Island has the potential for a world class public transit system, and yet for generations we have left bus service to languish and bus riders to bear the burden of unreliable service and infrequent or nonexistent buses. In September, 2025, after years of being forced to operate "efficient" service with limited, unsustainable funding, RIPTA was dealt a final blow, the Governor's crusade to "right size" RIPTA resulted in the largest service cuts in its history and a sharp drop in ridership followed. I encourage you to review our Service Cuts Impact Report, which chronicles the burden these service cuts have placed on riders across the state. You can read the report at <https://pvdstreets.org/save-ripta/>.

This report finds that across the fixed route system, from 2024 to 2025 levels ridership fell sharply by approximately 12.1% or 125,000 trips in the month of November following the largest service cuts in RIPTA's history. As a result, it now costs 29% more to deliver each hour of bus service than before the cuts.

The report also illustrates the consequences that RIPTA riders and workers are now suffering. Through rider and employee surveys, and ridership data obtained through public records requests, Save RIPTA's publication illustrates the wide ranging toll that cuts to bus service have had on members of the traveling public. Riders have lost their jobs and been forced to work fewer hours; lost access to educational opportunities and been chronically late to school; and are cut off from religious, commercial, and civic engagement -- especially on weekends. Drivers are being forced to handle overcrowding, running behind schedule, have less recovery time between routes, and are physically and mentally overwhelmed. *A copy of the report is attached to this message.*

But it doesn't have to be this way. The Save RIPTA Coalition is proposing multiple avenues to create sustainable funding sources for RIPTA and allow this capable organization to thrive.

Here are some common sense funding options that should be prioritized:

- **\$5 million Budget Allocation [Alzate [H8256](#)]**

- \$5 million budget allocation in FY '27 budget to restore the 2025 service cuts.
- **Increase RIPTA's share of the Highway Maintenance Account to 20% [Cortvriend [H8178](#)]**
 - Increases RIPTA's share of Highway Maintenance Account funds from 10% to 20%. An 80/20 split for surface transportation funding between highways and mass transit has been the standard in Congress since 1982.
- **Rideshare Sales Tax Reallocation [Stewart [H8145](#)]**
 - Allocates the current 7% sales tax collected on all Uber/Lyft rides to RIPTA's Ride Anywhere/paratransit operational budget.

The much anticipated and now complete efficiency study told us what we already knew: Before the service cuts RIPTA was doing as well or better than its peers at providing efficient service with the resources it was provided. It was not in need of "right sizing," rather it was in need of investment and expansion.

I urge you to support H7127 and increased funding options for RIPTA. Let's prioritize RIPTA as an essential piece of state infrastructure that gets people where they need to go and drives our economy and community forward.



Nicole O'Loughlin
Save RIPTA Coalition