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From: Ethan Caya <ethancaya@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 29, 2026 12:58 PM
To: Senate Finance
Subject: SUPPORT (S2095) - Highway Maintenance Account Increase

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Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing in SUPPORT of S2095 which updates the highway maintenance account funding split to give RIPTA a higher share than it currently has. RIPTA plays an important role in our state: it gets workers to their jobs, takes tourists through our towns and cities, and provides a means to live a more affordable and climate friendly car-lite or car-free lifestyle.

Despite the importance of the agency, RIPTA has been historically underfunded. Even with the lower funding they somehow remain on par with peer agencies, and that's because of the hardworking and smart people at the agency who care deeply about the people of this state and providing them reliable and convenient transportation. Imagine if the funding for RIPTA was increased! They could use their efficiency to add more routes, expand service times, and increase frequency! All things people want from a transit system, and things that align with the state's economic, climate, and housing policy strategies. I used to take the bus downtown quite often to visit local shops and cafes, but since the service cuts last year my bus only runs once per hour. That halving of frequency means it no longer feels like a fun and convenient trip downtown to spend a little money, it feels like a hassle and so I don't do it anymore. That's just one way that more funding could improve the experience.

Now in order to get increased funding for RIPTA that means taking funding from somewhere else, in this case that is RIDOT. Unlike RIPTA, RIDOT has ranked 30th in the nation for efficiency which means it performs worse per dollar than over half of the countries' DOTs! And everyone in the state notices it. They notice it when an important piece of highway infrastructure threatens to collapse. They notice it when they hit the 30th pot hole on a state maintained road on their commute to work. They notice it with bridge repairs that have taken decades to complete. I argue that the extra 10% of funding that would be shifted to RIPTA is better spent there than it would be spent at RIDOT because of the efficiency of RIPTA and how it plays a role in many of the state's strategies.

It's also worth noting the 80/20 split that is proposed mirrors what has been the norm in federal transportation spending since 1982!

That is why I am writing in SUPPORT of S2095.

Ethan Caya
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