

SAVE RIPTA

April 2, 2026
Senate Committee on Finance
RE: Support S2095

Dear Chair DiPalma and Committee Members,

We are pleased to submit our support for Senator Zurier's bill S2095 which would increase RIPTA's annual share of Highway Maintenance Account (HMA) funds from 10% to 20%.

While we appreciate Governor McKee's proposal of increasing RIPTA's share by a flat amount of \$9.3 million, **this does not allow RIPTA's budget to grow predictably and sustainably in future years.** RIPTA faces chronic funding shortfalls because its primary revenue sources, such as the gas tax, are not indexed to inflation. **The Governor's proposed increase repeats this mistake, making a future fiscal cliff inevitable as RIPTA's purchasing power will only continue to shrink.**

An 80/20 split for surface transportation funding between highways and mass transit has been the standard in Congress since 1982. Peer Northeast states provide even more funding for public transportation; Massachusetts' proposed FY2027 budget directs over 70% of state transportation funding to public transit. Connecticut DOT's FY2026 transportation budget directs 57% of capital spending to public transit. Delaware's FY2026 budget allocated 45.7% of transportation funding to public transit.

From 2013-2025, RIPTA's state funding decreased by 6% when adjusted for inflation. In contrast, the state budget has increased by 24%, and RIDOT's state funding has increased by 207%. **A 20% share of the Highway Maintenance Account - especially considering RIDOT's ballooning, \$1B budget -- is extremely affordable and will address a decade of funding inequality.**

As more households transition to electric vehicles, RIPTA's primary source of operational income, the motor fuel tax, will become less of a sustainable revenue source. The Highway Maintenance Account, funded by inspection and registration fees, will continue to be a reliable source of revenue.

Securing funding streams that do not rely on the federal government or declining gas tax revenue will not only achieve financial stability, but allow for the expansion of service to meet the needs of a growing population that requires access to the affordable and sustainable travel option that public transit provides.

Sincerely,

Dylan Giles
Operations Manager
Providence Streets Coalition/Save RIPTA