

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Valerie Reishuk and I live in Providence. I am writing in support of S2668, Sen. Zurier's gas tax inflation indexing bill.

Sam Zurier is my RI Senator and he is my friend. Three years ago, I asked Sen. Zurier to look more closely at Rhode Island's poor performance on emissions reduction for our Climate Goals. I think Sam's research into emissions gave both of us a deeper appreciation for RIPTA's role in our attainment of Climate Goals. This bill is a product of Sam's research.

As my friends from Providence Streets Coalition and RI Transit Riders will testify to you, gas tax legislation has unfairly shortchanged RIPTA's funding every year. By indexing our gas tax to inflation, an essential part of long term funding for transit can be secured.

This bill will give frugal Rhode Island families the transportation option that they really need in this moment of economic uncertainty: **the bus option**. Our families—from every ethnic background—sit at their kitchen tables and figure out if they can afford three cars, two cars, one car, or zero cars. They do not shy away from turning down a thermostat, or clipping coupons for the grocery store, and they will downsize a car if gas prices rise. But they can't do it if the state has not funded RIPTA for all the riders.

I am a single woman in Providence, and I have been at zero cars since 2015. I'm emitting very few hydrocarbons. I'm assisting our state in meeting Climate Goals. I'm solving the traffic congestion problems on Atwells Ave and I-195. I ride the bus with 30 other passengers.

Here's the difficult part: As I ask this committee *to pass bill S2668 out of committee* and into the budget process, I know that opposition to the bill may come from leadership, not from Senators on the floor. The next part is up to me. I promise you, I will pursue this matter beyond your committee. Never underestimate the irritability of a retired teacher who is not employed as a lobbyist. Especially if she has been a registered Democrat for 52 years, and she knows that Ocean Staters need the bus option.

Respectfully,

Val Reishuk  
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