



Via Electronic Mail

May 21, 2026

The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Room 211, State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: CLF **Supports** Senate Bill No. 2680 – Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (“RIPTA”)

Dear Chair DiPalma:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 2680, which would prohibit RIPTA from using state funds or bonds to pay for any work pursuant to the transit center joint development project.

CLF is a member-supported non-profit advocacy organization working to protect public health and the environment and build healthy communities in Rhode Island and throughout New England. CLF supports policies that increase services and ridership on RIPTA’s bus transportation system and help to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reduction mandates of the Act on Climate.

On March 10, 2024, CLF appeared before the House Finance Committee to oppose House Bill No. 7491, which would have authorized RIPTA to move forward with a proposed new transit center project to replace Kennedy Plaza. CLF noted that the bill was being proposed at the same time as the then proposed budget would leave an \$8 million hole in RIPTA’s 2025 operating budget, forcing RIPTA to propose cuts to critical transit services.

Unfortunately, the state’s failure to avoid a RIPTA budget shortfall for 2025 caused “the largest service reduction in the agency’s 59-year history . . . affecting 45 out of 63 routes and reducing service by approximately 15% across the system.”¹ RIPTA and its riders didn’t deserve these budget cuts. As noted in the Save RIPTA campaign’s 2025 Service Cuts Impact Report, “[a] much-delayed efficiency study, released on August 1 [2025], predictably concluded that RIPTA is an efficient operator of essential public transit service throughout the state.”² This report is a concise, easy to follow, graphically compelling account of the real-world pain and hardship that the service cuts caused thousands of our fellow Rhode Islanders who depend on RIPTA for access to transportation.

¹ Save RIPTA, 2025 Service Cuts Impact Report (Jan. 2026), available at https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Service-Impacts-Report_package.pdf.

² Id.



In March 2024, CLF asked why the General Assembly was being asked to benefit a few wealthy and influential local interests while leaving the RIPTA ridership—many of whom are from underserved, marginalized, and economically disadvantaged Rhode Island communities—with underfunded and reduced essential transportation services. That same question is a germane now as it was then.

Fortunately, today the General Assembly can champion the needs of the many by passing Senate Bill No. 2680, as well as the full suite of Save RIPTA bills.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Stang", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Richard Stang
Senior Attorney
Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Finance
Senator Samuel Bell
Senator Tiara Mack
Senator Meghan Kallman
Senator Ana Quezada
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation