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March 30, 2026

Chairman Louis DiPalma  
Senate Finance  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: RILTC Supports funding for RI Public Transportation Authority - S2095 - S2825 - S3084**

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Committee:

The Rhode Island Land Trust Council (the Council) is the coalition of the state's 50+ land trusts, which are community-based organizations that protect and steward Rhode Island's open spaces, farms, forestland, and historic sites for the public's benefit. The Council is dedicated to ensuring that every Rhode Islander has access to clean air, clean water, open spaces for recreation, and healthy food. These values are inextricably linked to a well-funded public transportation system, which plays a vital role in shaping our communities.

Reliable public transit connects people to jobs, schools, healthcare, and outdoor spaces, reducing our reliance on cars and decreasing traffic congestion and emissions.

Unfortunately, years of underinvestment have put RIPTA in a dire situation. The agency has already made significant reductions leading to job losses, route cuts, and a decline in service. This is devastating for the many Rhode Islanders who depend on RIPTA daily—especially those without other transportation options.

While we support the current RIPTA budget article, it is clear that the funding allocated does not go nearly far enough. We need to treat RIPTA as the essential service it is and secure long-term, sustainable funding to ensure it thrives. Investing in public transit is not just about mobility; it's about equity, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and smart land use. It's about ensuring that all Rhode Islanders, regardless of income, age, or ability, can get where they need to go efficiently.

The Council supports Senate Bill 2095 that would provide 20% of the proceeds from the RI Highway Maintenance Account to RIPTA, Senate Bill 2825 that would appropriate \$5 million in much needed funding to restore the service cuts that went into effect in fall of 2025, and Senate Bill 3084 that would direct sales tax on ride share companies to RIPTA's Ride Paratransit Program and Ride Anywhere programs.

I urge you to fully fund RIPTA and commit to a long-term vision that recognizes public transit as the backbone of a thriving, sustainable, and equitable Rhode Island. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Sayles", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Kate Sayles, Director