



Climate Jobs Rhode Island
1540 Pontiac Ave Suite A,
Cranston, RI 02920

March 4, 2026

The Honorable John P. Burke
Senate Committee on Labor & Gaming
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: Senate Bill 2323 - Commuter Transportation Benefits Act

Dear Chairman Burke and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. On behalf of Climate Jobs Rhode Island, I write in **support** of Senate Bill 2323, the Commuter Transportation Benefits Act.

Climate Jobs Rhode Island (CJRI) is a coalition of more than thirty (30) environmental, labor and community organizations committed to working together to make Rhode Island a national leader in the development of a resilient 21st century economy through a Just Transition, one that centers our frontline communities and frontline workers.

Our members range from those who represent the workers who build, repair, and maintain Rhode Island's critical infrastructure and energy systems like the RI Building and Construction Trades Council, to environmental and community organizations like The Nature Conservancy, United Way of RI, and the Childhood Lead Action Project, to name a few.

Tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders rely on RIPTA every day to get to work. For many, public transit is not optional- it is how they maintain steady employment and support their families. According to RIPTA, 40% of its nearly 17 million annual trips are work-related. Many large employers provide free or subsidized parking while offering no comparable benefit for employees who rely on transit. This creates inequity for workers who cannot afford to drive or choose not to, simultaneously reinforcing congestion and sprawl.

Requiring Rhode Island's largest employers to offer transit passes as a fringe benefit is a straightforward way to level the playing field. The top 25 employers in Rhode Island collectively employ more than 100,000 people. If even a fraction of those workers were offered transit benefits and chose to ride the bus, the impact would be significant: reduced highway congestion, lower household transportation costs, and increased ridership and fare revenue for RIPTA.

For working families, transportation is often the [second-highest household expense](#) after housing. For employers, offering transit benefits can improve recruitment and retention, and expand access to a broader workforce.

S2323 also supports Rhode Island's climate and clean energy workforce goals. Transportation remains the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in our state, and expanding access to public transit reduces emissions, removes traffic from our roads, and strengthens our economy. As we grow our clean energy sector, we must ensure workers can reliably and affordably access job sites. A strong, stable transit system is foundational to a just transition and to building a resilient 21st century economy.

For all of these reasons, CJRI urges you to support S2323. This bill is a pro-worker, pro-climate policy that strengthens RIPTA, reduces emissions, and ensures that large employers contribute to a more equitable and sustainable transportation system.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Serena Russell".

Serena Russell

Policy Coordinator, Climate Jobs Rhode Island