



Via Electronic Mail

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Senator John P. Burke
Chair, Senate Labor & Gaming
Room 35, State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: CLF **Supports** Senate Bill No. 2323 – The Commuter Transportation Benefits Act

Dear Chair Burke:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill No. 2323, requiring Rhode Island’s largest employers (500 or more employees) to offer transit passes as a fringe benefit.

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 system and help to achieve the greenhouse gas emissions reduction mandates of the Act on Climate.

CLF works alongside several RIPTA transit rider advocacy groups, including the Kennedy Plaza Coalition, the Save RIPTA Coalition, Providence Streets Coalition, Rhode Island Transit Riders, and GrowSmartRI (collectively the “RIPTA Rider Advocates”). Requiring Rhode Island’s largest employers to offer transit passes as a fringe benefit is a simple way to improve congestion, reduce emissions, and increase Rhode Island’s competitiveness as a business-friendly destination.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management’s published Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, Rhode Island’s transportation sector accounts for 37% of the state’s greenhouse gas emissions.¹ On April 14, 2021, Governor McKee signed into law the Act on Climate, which sets enforceable climate emissions reduction mandates.² In particular, the Act on Climate mandates that Rhode Island achieve greenhouse gas emissions of 45% below 1990 levels by 2030, 80% by 2040, and net-zero emissions by 2050.³

¹ R.I. Dep’t of Env’tl. Mgmt., *2023 Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (2025)*, available at <https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2025-11/RIDEM-ghg-inventory-2023.pdf>

² R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-6.2-9.

³ *Id.*

These targets can only be achieved by substantially reducing the number of personal carbon-producing vehicles on Rhode Island's roads. One of the best tools in Rhode Island's toolbox to meet this target is to substantially increase RIPTA ridership. Moreover, since RIPTA currently serves many low-income communities in Rhode Island, there are compelling environmental justice issues that can only be addressed by fully funding RIPTA and funding the recommendations of the TMP.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council ("NRDC") Car Access in Rhode Island Fact Sheet ("RI Car Access Fact Sheet")⁴, a typical household with cars spends \$13,852 annually on personal vehicles. On the other hand, according to the American Public Transportation Association, individuals who use public transit save an average of \$9,000 annually compared to those who drive. Offering transit passes would ensure that employees, especially those with lower incomes, can access more affordable transportation options, reducing the burden of expensive gas, parking, and car maintenance costs.

We therefore ask that you pass Senate Bill No. 2323.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Stang
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Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Labor & Gaming
Senator Jacob E. Bissaillon
President Valarie J. Lawson
Senator Louis P. DiPalma
Senator Hanna M. Gallo
Senator Victoria Gu
Senator Lori Urso
Senator Samuel D. Zurier
Senator Jonathon Acosta
Senator Samuel Bell
Senator Tiara Mack
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation

⁴ Natural Resources Defense Council, <https://www.nrdc.org/resources/who-doesnt-have-car>.