

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Dennis Howard <dfhoward903@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2025 8:53 AM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Comment on proposed new registration fee for Electric Vehicles (2026 budget bill H5076, Chapter 5, Section 3

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am Dennis Howard, residing in Middletown, RI. I am a volunteer with the Rhode Island Chapter of the Citizens' Climate Lobby (RI-CCL). I am writing to express my conditional support for the Governor 's proposed new registration fee in the 2026 budget H5076, Chapter 5, Section 3 for all-electric and hybrid vehicles. Three conditions temper my support for H5076: 1) 30% of the new revenues collected should be allocated to the budget of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority Operations (RIPTA); 2) the fee structure should be graduated based on vehicle weight, with fees scaled to be less for lighter vehicles and greater for heavier vehicles; and 3) fees for hybrid EVs should be less than for all-electric vehicles, since hybrid vehicle owners already pay some taxes on fuel whereas all-electric vehicle owners don't pay any fuel taxes.

My recommendations for changes in the proposed registration fees are as follows:

1) For the new EV fees, 30% of the revenues should be allocated to the RIPTA. RIPTA has been chronically underfunded such that its 2026 Operating Budget faces a \$31Million funding deficit. The proposed new EV fees would help RIPTA increase ridership (a good outcome for citizens who cannot afford a personal vehicle). The additional support for RIPTA would also help towards meeting the goals of the RI Act on Climate.

2) Rather than being a flat fee, the proposed EV fees should be graduated based on vehicle weight and on whether the vehicle is all-electric or a hybrid. In general, heavier vehicles cause greater wear impacts on roads and bridges, thus their fees should be proportionately greater than for lighter vehicles. All-electric vehicles should pay greater fees than hybrid vehicles, since the latter already pay some taxes on fuel.

I believe that citizens who own all-electric or hybrid vehicles of different weights would be more supportive of a well reasoned fee matrix rather than a "one-size fits all" approach. I would appreciate your considering such amendments in the Governor's budget.

Dennis Howard