[Date]

Representative [xxx]

State House Room [xxx]

Senator [xxx]

State House Room [xxx]

Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative ---- and Senator -----:

Please support adequate funding for Regional Transit Authorities in the upcoming FY 2019 state budget. Without responsible state funding of RTAs, our local transit service will be reduced, and fares will increase for people who depend on reliable, affordable public transportation to get around our region.

The Pioneer Valley Transit Authority depends on state support from the Commonwealth Transportation Fund for a significant amount of funding. Yet the Governor has level-funded this budget at $80.4 million, which will lead to harmful consequences for our most vulnerable residents. Because of the Governor’s recommended budget, the PVTA is facing a budget gap of over $3 million. In April, the PVTA Board will vote on service cuts and fare increases to take effect in July.

By law, RTA budgets must be balanced. There are few, if any, alternative sources of revenue. The ongoing cuts to public transit are the direct result of state-level choices which cause real harm to real people.

[Insert personal anecdote or story.]

In addition to the harm caused to individuals, cutting RTA funding has negative public health impacts for people and communities, negative economic impacts for businesses and neighborhoods, and negative environmental and climate impacts at a time when we should be encouraging public transit.

I ask you and all legislators to stop this punishment of people who depend on the PVTA and other RTAs. The House and Senate budgets should reflect a spending level of $88 million in budget line item 1595-6370. If the Ways and Means budgets do not reflect that number, please support an amendment that will do so. Similarly, the Conference Committee Report should reflect that funding level. And if the Governor reduces the legislative authorization for RTAs, please support a budget override. Residents like me are counting on you.

Respectfully,

[Name]

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