

Testimony in Support of H7622

Subject: FOR H7622

Dear Chair Bennett and Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Dr. Alison Tovar, and I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the Brown University School of Public Health. I am writing in support of H7622, which would grant the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the authority to implement and enforce the state's Food Waste Ban.

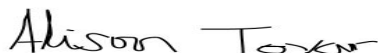
My research focuses on nutrition, food systems, and environmental determinants of health. From a public health perspective, food waste is not only an environmental issue—it is also a health issue. Food waste contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, increases landfill burden, and represents a major loss of resources across the food system. At the same time, food insecurity remains a persistent challenge for many Rhode Island families. Policies that reduce food waste and improve diversion can simultaneously support environmental sustainability and more resilient food systems.

Rhode Island has already taken an important step by passing the Food Waste Ban. However, without clear regulatory authority for DEM to develop rules and oversee implementation, the policy cannot reach its full potential. Providing DEM with this authority is a practical and common-sense solution that will allow the state to implement the law effectively and support large food waste generators in complying with the policy.

Strengthening food waste reduction policies aligns with broader efforts to improve environmental health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and build a more sustainable food system for Rhode Island residents.

Thank you for your consideration and for your work on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Alison Tovar, PhD (Providence, RI)



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