



**RHODE ISLAND**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
235 Promenade Street, Room 425  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

February 26, 2026

The Honorable David A. Bennett  
Chairman  
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: H 7735 An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Organics Diversion at Catered Events Act**

Dear Chairman Bennett,

Thank you for providing the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) the opportunity to comment on H 7735, which would institute new organics diversion requirements for caterers. DEM is not taking a position on the policy proposed in this legislation, but we have concerns about our ability to implement it with existing resources.

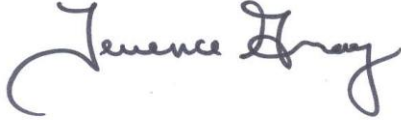
H 7735 would require caterers to annually submit to DEM a food waste diversion plan outlining topics such as the types of food waste and organic materials expected to be generated and the identity of the compost service provider that the caterer has engaged. It would prohibit caterers from operating at covered events where food is prepared for fifty or more meals if the plan has not been submitted to DEM. DEM, in coordination with the RI Department of Health, would be responsible for enforcement of the requirements and would be authorized to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to implement the legislation.

DEM currently administers a voluntary [Green Event](#) certification program covering topics including single-use plastics, food waste, and energy and water usage. DEM certifies events as “Green Events” based on a checklist completed by the event organizer. On average, around a dozen of the state’s largest events have been certified as Green Events for each of the last several years. Additionally, DEM is working to expand efforts to promote sustainability at the many events held at our properties. However, instituting mandatory food waste diversion requirements for caterers would require additional staff to create the annual diversion plan form, develop regulations, and enforce the provisions of the legislation.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on this legislation and would be pleased to make ourselves available as needed. Please feel free to contact Ryan Mulcahey, DEM Director of

Legislative Affairs, at [ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov](mailto:ryan.mulcahey@dem.ri.gov) should you have any additional questions or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Terrence Gray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Terrence" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Gray".

Terrence Gray, P.E.  
Director

CC: Members of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources  
The Honorable Lauren Carson  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House  
Lynne Urbani, House Policy Director