



David Dadekian
Eat Drink RI LLC
1061 Fish Hill Road
Coventry, RI 02816

Testimony in support of H 7258

May 13, 2026

Honorable Chairperson Abney and the members of the House Committee on Finance:

I am the founder and president of Eat Drink RI, one of the top media and marketing companies in the region for all things culinary. As an advocate for our food system, a small business owner who wants to see our state's food and drink economy thrive, and as a citizen concerned about our changing climate and food insecurity, **I strongly support H 7258.**

Rhode Island is currently the only state in New England that is not providing funding for this type of program connecting farmers and SNAP beneficiaries. Farm Fresh RI has been independently fundraising for and administering the Bonus Bucks program since 2009 and has distributed over \$1.7M in Bonus Bucks to local Rhode Island farmers since its inception. **Funding Bonus Bucks has a dual impact on addressing food insecurity and farm viability.**

State funding leverages federal grant programs and private philanthropy. Bonus Bucks is currently supported by the USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive program which requires \$1 for \$1 matching of federal funds. Farm Fresh RI has asked for matching funds from the USDA, but can no longer support the match entirely on their own. This program is uniquely structured to incentivize SNAP participants to make purchases directly with local businesses.

Thank you to Representative Donovan and her co-sponsors on H 7258. Respectfully, I urge you to pass H 7258 forward to the full House for passage this session. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David S. Dadekian".

David Dadekian