

May 19, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chair, House Finance Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the committee,

On behalf of our members, I write in support of H 8512, which would create two annual sales tax-exempt restaurant weeks in Rhode Island.


Rhode Island's hospitality industry is one of the economic engines of our state. Restaurants, cafés, bars, caterers, and hospitality businesses support tens of thousands of jobs, drive tourism, and contribute significantly to local economies in every city and town. However, the industry is struggling. Restaurants historically have profit margins of around 3-5%. The rapid rise in the price of fuel, food, energy, insurance, and labor has pushed the hospitality industry to the brink. In 2025, **42% of restaurants nationwide reported no profit.**

H8512 represents a creative thinking approach to supporting both small Rhode Island businesses and Rhode Island consumers. By exempting food and beverage purchases from the sales tax during designated restaurant weeks, this legislation would encourage Rhode Islanders and visitors alike to dine out, explore new establishments, and increase customer traffic during key times of the year while also providing meaningful savings to consumers.

Restaurant weeks have long been successful marketing and tourism tools that showcase Rhode Island's nationally recognized culinary scene. This proposal would build upon that success by creating an additional incentive for customers to support local establishments. Increased restaurant activity has a ripple effect throughout the economy, benefiting employees, local suppliers, tourism-related businesses, and surrounding commercial districts.

Rhode Island's hospitality community has consistently demonstrated resilience, innovation, and commitment to our communities. H8512 recognizes the importance of investing in an industry that plays a central role in the identity and economic vitality of our state.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support H8512.

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 [www.RIHospitality.org](http://www.RIHospitality.org)

Sincerely,

Ryan Moot  
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RI Hospitality Association

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