



May 7, 2024

The Honorable Susan Donovan  
Members, House Health and Human Services Committee  
State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Representative Donovan and Committee Members,

On behalf of RI BIO, I'm writing to express my strong opposition to H8220, a bill that will establish the Rhode Island Drug Cost Review Commission. RI BIO is the professional trade association and hub for the life sciences in the greater Rhode Island area. We support the growth of this industry and its professionals through education, collaboration and advocacy.

Our work will fuel the continued expansion of an industry that is already making enormous contributions to Rhode Island's economy. Investments here by biopharmaceutical leaders such as Amgen and Vertex reflect the confidence these companies have in Rhode Island's skilled workforce and in the capabilities of our leading research institutions, including Brown University, URI, and our teaching hospitals.

Government price setting of pharmaceuticals – so often the fruit of investment by life sciences companies - is exactly the wrong message to send when so much effort is being made to position Rhode Island as a life sciences-friendly state.

This latest effort to position Rhode Island as a life sciences center can be seen in the work of the newly created Rhode Island Life Sciences Hub, established through legislation sponsored last year by House Speaker Joseph Shekarchi and funded through a \$45 million appropriation included in Governor McKee's FY 24 budget.

Our new Rhode Island Life Science Hub Board is made up of distinguished life science industry leaders including the presidents of Brown University, URI and Rhode Island College; the dean of Brown University's Warren Alpert Medical School; the CEOs of Care New England Health System and Lifespan Corp.; R.I. Commerce Secretary Liz Tanner; Brian Britson, vice president of operations for Amgen Rhode Island, and Patrice Milos, Co-Chair of the board for RI BIO.

This board is working urgently to expand the life sciences industry, which is exactly the vision laid out by House Speaker Joseph Shekarchi when he introduced legislation to create the Rhode Island Life Sciences Hub in May 2023. In introducing the bill, Speaker Shekarchi said;

"Rhode Island already has so much of the knowledge needed to make our state a hub for the life sciences: world-class learning institutions and hospitals, which will be key partners in this effort. The Governor has included funding to jump-start our efforts in the proposed FY24 budget, and we're looking

forward to the development of new lab space in Providence. This bill creates the entity to facilitate our efforts and catalyze our life science industries. We have seen our neighbors in adjacent states create similar entities; just in Worcester, the biotech cluster has created more than 1,000 jobs and an annual economic impact of more than one billion dollars. There is no reason Rhode Island cannot become a leader in the bio and life sciences. The workforce development in this industry will help our state retain graduates of our fantastic colleges and universities, which will, in turn, bolster our economy and attract new, high-paying jobs.”

The proposed Rhode Island Drug Pricing Commission undermines the very idea behind the creation of the Rhode Island Life Sciences Hub and will send the wrong message to life sciences companies considering moving to Rhode Island or expanding their current footprint.

The creation of new biopharmaceutical innovations to treat disease requires a massive investment in research, an investment that must be recouped once new medicines are approved and made available to patients. Threatening this return on this investment through price controls will have a chilling effect on future investments needed to find the next cures for the diseases that continue to claim the lives of so many Rhode Islanders each year.

The goal of reducing the cost of medicine for Rhode Islanders is laudable but this objective can be achieved by other policy changes that don't brand Rhode Island as inhospitable to the life sciences industry.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Malysz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Carol Malysz, Executive Director  
RI BIO