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March 5, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese, Chair  
House Committee on Labor  
State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H 7366 – An Act Related to Food and Drugs – Sanitation in Food Establishments**

Dear Chair Corvese:

Please accept this letter regarding H 7366, legislation that would establish a restricted receipt account at the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (RIDLT) to be used for hospitality industry workforce training grants, including certified food and alcohol safety training programs to be offered in multiple languages, funded by an annual fee of \$50.00 dollars to be charged by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to food service establishments. This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

RIDOH has many different fees related to food businesses based on the different license types. These fees are all listed in RIDOH's [Fee Structure for Licensing, Laboratory and Administrative Services Provided by the Department of Health \(216-RICR-10-05-2\) - Rhode Island Department of State](#) under Section 2.11 (Food Protection Fees). The fees range from \$50-\$550 per year depending on the type of license required. The bill would apply to most food businesses except for the exempted establishments listed in the current statute (nonprofit organizations, hospitals, public institutions, farmers markets, roadside farm stands, municipalities, etc.). This legislation would require RIDOH to invest in changing our current licensing system to ensure the exempted establishments are not charged, given that RIDOH's license types are not set up by those categories listed as exempt. RIDOH would also need to set up a mechanism to track and transfer these funds to RIDLT.

RIDOH also has concerns about the establishment of new, additional fees. Currently, restaurants must pay licensing fees and the \$50 certified food safety manager fee, about which many restaurants complain. Another concern is that the proposed legislation includes all food establishments as defined in [R.I. Gen. Laws Section 21-27-1](#), which means that it would include many types of businesses that are not currently required to have a certified manager (e.g., cottage foods, manufacturers, pre-packaged). As such, they would have to pay the additional fee but not receive any benefit, because they do not need the training supported by the fees. This would particularly hurt small businesses that do not require the certified manager training. Lastly, this would be an even greater burden for new food establishments that currently pay licensing fees, plan review fees, and a certified manager fee (for restaurants). H 7366 would require them to pay this additional proposed fee in addition to the fees listed above. The plan review fee is equivalent to the license fee.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome M. Larkin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jerome M. Larkin, MD  
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor  
The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy