



March 30, 2026

The Honorable Arthur J. Corvese

Chairman, House Labor Committee

Rhode Island State House

Providence, Rhode Island 02903

OPPOSE H 7966 – Extreme Temperature Worker Protection Act

Dear Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Retail Federation, I write in opposition to H 7966, the “Extreme Temperature Worker Protection Act.”

The Retail Federation and our members strongly support workplace safety and recognize the importance of protecting employees from extreme weather conditions. Many employers already implement practical measures—such as hydration, rest breaks, and protective equipment—to ensure worker safety in both hot and cold environments.

However, H 7966 establishes a highly prescriptive and inflexible regulatory framework that will be difficult to implement across a wide range of industries and work environments. This legislation imposes detailed and rigid requirements on employers, including mandatory temperature-triggered work protocols, paid preventative breaks, acclimatization schedules, and extensive written plans and recordkeeping obligations. While well-intentioned, these provisions do not account for the operational realities of many workplaces, particularly in construction,

logistics, agriculture, and small business settings where conditions can change rapidly and require flexibility.

The bill also requires the development of formal temperature-related injury and illness prevention plans, designation of safety coordinators, quarterly training, and ongoing data collection and reporting. These administrative burdens will be particularly challenging for small and mid-sized employers who may not have the internal resources to manage such complex compliance requirements.

Rhode Island retail employers are already subject to federal OSHA standards and existing state workplace safety laws that address many of these issues. Rather than layering on a new and expansive regulatory structure, a more effective approach would be to provide guidance, education, and targeted enforcement of existing standards, while working collaboratively with employers to promote best practices.

At a time when Rhode Island is working to support economic growth, workforce participation, and business competitiveness, H 7966 risks creating additional costs and uncertainty that may discourage investment and job creation.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island Retail Federation respectfully urges the Committee to oppose H 7966.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Laurie White

President

Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce