

March 30, 2026

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

Chairman Corvese and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the RI Hospitality Association, I write in opposition to H 7966 and H 8311.

Our industry strongly supports protecting employees and maintaining safe working conditions. That is already a core part of how professional kitchens, catering operations, and hospitality businesses operate every day. However, as currently written, this bill is simply unworkable for commercial kitchens and many common hospitality environments.


The bill applies rigid temperature thresholds and operational requirements to workplaces that, by their very nature, cannot function within those constraints.

Commercial kitchens are one of the most obvious examples. Kitchens routinely exceed the bill's "initial heat trigger" of 80 degrees due to ovens, grills, fryers, and dish machines. Under this legislation, that would trigger mandatory cool-down breaks, strict shade and cooling requirements, and work restrictions that would make it nearly impossible to maintain continuous food preparation and service during peak hours. Restaurants cannot simply pause operations every two hours, or every hour during higher heat conditions, without completely disrupting service, food safety timing, and customer experience.

The same is true for outdoor and mobile food operations. A traditional Rhode Island clam bake, by definition, involves high heat, steam, and outdoor cooking conditions that would immediately trigger multiple provisions of this bill. Food trucks, which operate in compact, high-heat environments, would face similar challenges, with no practical way to create compliant "cool-down areas" within their footprint.

Outdoor dining and event-based service would also be severely impacted. During the summer months when Rhode Island's hospitality industry is at its peak, heat index thresholds would frequently be met or exceeded. Requiring constant monitoring, mandated break schedules, and physical infrastructure like shaded recovery areas sized to workforce levels is not feasible in many outdoor dining setups, sidewalk cafés, or temporary event spaces.

Even behind the scenes, essential operations like dishwashing areas would be affected. Dishwashing areas often involve high temperatures, steam, and humidity as a function of sanitation requirements. These are controlled environments designed for food safety, but they would nonetheless trigger the bill's requirements in ways that are operationally incompatible.

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Beyond logistics, the bill also imposes significant administrative and staffing burdens, such as detailed acclimatization schedules, continuous temperature monitoring, and designated safety coordinators that may be manageable in large industrial settings but are not realistic for small and mid-sized hospitality businesses that make up the majority of our industry.


In practice, this legislation would force restaurants, caterers, and food service operators to either dramatically scale back operations during peak periods or risk noncompliance. That is not a workable outcome for businesses, employees, or the broader economy.

We respectfully urge the Committee to oppose H 7966 and H 8311, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach to temperature regulation does not translate to the realities of hospitality operations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Moot
Manager of Government Affairs
RI Hospitality Association

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