



Honorable Carol McEntee
Chairperson, House Small Business Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

February 3, 2021

RE: Testimony on HB7095- Extends the period for the moratorium imposed on the enforcement of any municipal ordinance or zoning regulation relating to any alterations or modifications made to an establishment in order to comply with emergency declarations until April 1, 2023.

Chairperson McEntee,

The undersigned members of the Rhode Island Business Coalition support H7095 –Extends the period for the moratorium imposed on the enforcement of any municipal ordinance or zoning regulation relating to any alterations or modifications made to an establishment in order to comply with emergency declarations until April 1, 2023. This act would continue a moratorium on any municipal ordinance or zoning requirement that would penalize owners of food service establishments and bars for any modification or alternations to their premises in response to an emergency declaration by the Governor or local municipal officials.

During this pandemic, most municipalities worked with businesses and relaxed their zoning requirements for restaurants as they expanded their dining options. Many restaurants expanded their outdoor dining options in 2020 due to the COVID indoor dining restrictions. This legislation would allow these businesses to continue offering their outdoor dining options throughout 2023 without having to go through the zoning process in their individual municipalities. This pandemic has hit small businesses, particularly restaurants, very hard. Many small businesses rely on their outdoor dining in order to sustain themselves.

We respectfully ask that you support this legislation.

Sincerely,

Rhode Island Hospitality Association – Dale J. Venturini, President/CEO

Rhode Island Staffing, William Roth, Executive Director

Rhode Island Small Business Economic Summit – Grafton Willey, Tax and Budget Committee Chairman

Rhode Island Society of Certified Public Accountants – Melissa Travis, President

Rhode Island Manufacturers Association – David M. Chenevert, Executive Director