



State of Rhode Island
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS REGULATION
Division of Building, Design, and Fire Professionals
560 Jefferson Blvd.
Warwick, RI 02886

February 8, 2023

The Honorable Carol McEntee
Chair, House Committee on Small Business
Rhode Island State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: HB 5264 – AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES – ZONING ORDINANCES

Dear Chair McEntee:

We write on behalf of the Department of Business Regulation with regard to HB 5264. We support the Sponsors' efforts to build on measures taken to support outdoor dining during the COVID-19 pandemic – helping to keep hundreds of small businesses open, provide paychecks to thousands of employees, and keep communities across our state vibrant during the height of the pandemic.

We appreciate this bill's inclusion of language recognizing the importance of public safety as outdoor dining grows and evolves. Rhode Island's fire and building codes are critical tools to ensuring the safety and accessibility of business establishments in our state, and we thank the Sponsors for their inclusion of this language in the current draft. We would be happy to work with the Sponsors on any clarifying language that would be helpful as it relates to the ongoing applicability of the fire and building codes to existing and planned outdoor dining structures.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony and we are available at your convenience to further discuss this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Timothy McLaughlin
Rhode Island State Fire Marshal

James Camblo
Rhode Island Building Code Commissioner

CC: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Small Business
Elizabeth K. Dwyer, Esq., Acting Director, Department of Business Regulation