



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

January 18, 2024

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

RE: HB 7064 – AN ACT RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES – OUTDOOR DINING ACT

Dear Chair McEntee:

We write on behalf of the Department of Business Regulation in support of HB 7064. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor dining has been a lifeline for Rhode Island's hospitality industry – 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,

Matthew Santacroce  
Deputy Director, Department of Business Regulation

CC: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Small Business  
Elizabeth K. Dwyer, Esq., Director, Department of Business Regulation  
Timothy McLaughlin, State Fire Marshal  
James Cambio, State Building Code Commissioner  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel