



RHODE ISLAND

**Executive Office of Commerce**

317 Iron Horse Way, Suite 203, Providence, RI 02908  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

January 16, 2024

Representative Carol Hagan McEntee  
Chair, House Small Business Committee  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: HB 7064 – Outdoor Dining Act

Dear Chair McEntee,

Rhode Island Commerce is pleased to offer this written testimony in support of House Bill 7064, An Act Relating to Cities and Towns – Outdoor Dining Act.

Since the arrival of COVID-19 in Rhode Island, policies such as the expansion of outdoor dining capacity served as vital lifelines for our state’s hospitality sector, especially the small businesses that were so severely impacted by the pandemic. Over the past four years, expanded outdoor dining has provided a key source of revenue for severely impacted restaurants and stimulated overall economic activity by increasing foot traffic in downtowns and Main Street corridors.

This proposed legislation extends the existing moratorium on outdoor dining regulations until February 15, 2025, and proposes standards for the municipal regulation of outdoor dining at food services establishments. Rhode Island’s hospitality sector plays a significant role in the state’s economy and the development of standards that will allow outdoor dining areas installed during the COVID-19 pandemic to remain in place after the moratorium is extinguished will help maintain the value of these investments in our main streets and downtown areas.

As such, Rhode Island Commerce is pleased to support House Bill 7064 and the safeguards this bill puts in place for the expansion of outdoor dining across our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth M. Tanner". The signature is written in a cursive style.

---

Elizabeth M. Tanner, Esq.  
Secretary of Commerce

CC. Honorable Members of the House Committee on Small Business  
Tiffany Johnson, Committee Clerk  
Nicole McCarty, Chief Legal Counsel