



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF COMMERCE

Submitted via email

June 10, 2025

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chair, House Committee on Small Business
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H. 6392 — Outdoor Dining Act

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 6392, Outdoor Dining Act. The Executive Office of Commerce and the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation are in favor of allowing restaurants to offer temporary outdoor dining services in the event that their establishment becomes uninhabitable due to fire or flood. I recognize that this legislation was inspired by the recent fire at Matunuck Oyster Bar and commend the efforts to support the business and its employees. In business since 2009 with hundreds of employees, Matunuck Oyster Bar is a prime example of the local businesses that make Rhode Island thrive.

The eighteen-month limitation on temporary outdoor dining, combined with the acknowledgement and incorporation of municipal governance, makes this legislation a workable solution that will provide flexibility to Matunuck Oyster Bar throughout their recovery and rebuild.

Rhode Island is built on the backs of small businesses like Matunuck Oyster Bar; they are part of our DNA. It is imperative that we support creative solutions like this legislation to maintain the character of our state. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Tanner, Esq.
Secretary of Commerce

CC. Honorable Members of the House Committee on Small Business
The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel