

March 26, 2021

RI General Assembly  
House Committee on Small Business

RE: House Bill No. 6119 – Letter of Opposition

I am writing on behalf of the City of Newport opposing House Bill No. 6119.

Newport has worked very closely with the hospitality industry here in Newport and has allowed a very aggressive use of additional space for restaurants much in contravention of our zoning ordinance, liquor license rules, as well as victualing regulations. We have allowed much of this encroachment into public spaces.

We have two objections to this bill

1. The first is the objection that we have is that the bill unnecessarily usurps local regulatory control. It is unnecessary and without foundation.
2. The second is that in Newport we have had requests by certain businesses to be more aggressive in their use of additional space. More than what we have permitted thus far and despite the use of space being well outside of our local regulatory framework. We have every intention of working with these businesses to allow a more aggressive use. However, this type of bill causes a pause in that thinking and may in fact freeze that attitude.

Thank you for taking the time to read this short note.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Nicholson, Jr.  
City Manager

JJN/paf