



April 15, 2026

The Honorable V. Susan Sosnowski, Chair  
Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee  
Rhode Island Senate  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: SENATE BILL 2438 – AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION -- SCHOOL WASTE RECYCLING AND REFUSE DISPOSAL

Chair Sosnowski and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 2438, which proposes amendments to the School Waste Recycling and Refuse Disposal statutes. The League appreciates the intent of this legislation, which advances important goals including reducing food waste in schools, strengthening food recovery systems, improving recycling and composting practices, and expanding education around sustainability and environmental stewardship. These objectives align with broader state efforts to reduce landfill use, support food security initiatives, and promote responsible environmental practices within our public institutions.

The League is particularly supportive of provisions that strengthen waste reduction planning through periodic waste audits, encourage the donation and redistribution of surplus food to local food banks, and include liability protections that help facilitate safe and effective food donation programs. These elements provide a constructive framework for improving school operations while also delivering meaningful benefits to local communities.

At the same time, the League respectfully notes that successful implementation of these initiatives will depend on ensuring that school districts and municipalities are provided with adequate flexibility, clarity, and support. Municipal school systems vary significantly in size, capacity, and access to infrastructure, particularly with respect to organics diversion systems, vendor availability, and logistics for expanded food recovery programs. As such, implementation timelines should account for these regional differences to ensure feasibility across all communities.

Additionally, the League would encourage continued attention to preserving local discretion in procurement processes to ensure that school districts are able to maintain competitive and cost-effective contracting for food service providers. It will also be important to structure reporting and compliance requirements in a way that avoids unnecessary administrative duplication and minimizes additional burdens on already resource-constrained school departments. Where new operational requirements are established, consideration should also be given to the need for technical assistance and appropriate state-level support to ensure successful implementation.

The League believes that with these considerations in mind, Senate Bill 2438 has the potential to further strengthen Rhode Island's efforts to reduce school waste, expand food recovery systems, and promote environmental education. We appreciate the Committee's consideration and look forward to continued collaboration as this proposal advances.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee

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