



March 3, 2026

Chairman Louis DiPalma
Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State Senate
Providence, RI 02903

SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the I-195 Redevelopment District Commission, I am writing to express strong support for Article 6 of the Governor's proposed budget, as well as the Department of Commerce budget that provides continued support to the 195 District. Together, these provisions represent a comprehensive and strategic investment in Rhode Island's long-term economic competitiveness and job creation.

Over the past decade, the 195 District has transformed former highway land into one of Rhode Island's most dynamic engines of growth, catalyzing hundreds of millions in private investment and creating a thriving hub for housing, innovation, and public space. The District has delivered nationally recognized assets like 195 District Park, advanced a growing life sciences cluster and unlocked new mixed-income housing and cultural projects. Just as importantly, it has built momentum — attracting employers, residents, and visitors while reinforcing its reputation as a growing Innovation District.

The proposed economic development bonds included in Article 6 will build on this success. In particular, the proposed \$70 million bond for Site Development would support land acquisition and assembly, environmental remediation, infrastructure and utility installation, site preparation, and targeted project investments. For the 195 District, this type of flexible funding is essential to unlocking additional parcels for development and ensuring they are ready for private investment. We know firsthand the importance of investing upfront in site readiness and infrastructure, which reduces risk, shortens predevelopment timelines, and makes properties more attractive for private investment. The 195 District's shovel-ready sites have been a key factor in our ability to attract more than \$800 million in private investment and catalyze a growing mixed-use neighborhood that blends housing, research, innovation, and public space.

Importantly, these bond resources would also provide an opportunity to build on the success of the 195 District model. Strategic site-development funding could allow the Commission and the state to acquire additional properties, prepare them for investment, and replicate the proven approach that has transformed former highway land into a nationally recognized innovation district. With continued investment, Rhode Island can scale this model to unlock new economic opportunities and support growth industries across the state.

The proposed \$45 million bond for Growth Industry Infrastructure represents a critical investment in Rhode Island's key economic sectors, including ocean technology, defense, life



sciences, and data analytics. The 195 District has emerged as the state's premier hub for life sciences and innovation, anchored by strong partnerships with Brown University and other research institutions and supported by a rapidly expanding ecosystem of startups, scale-ups, and research-driven companies. Purpose-built lab and innovation space in the District is helping Rhode Island compete for cutting-edge research, federal funding, and private investment, while positioning the state as a growing center for biomedical innovation and advanced therapies.

We also strongly support the Commerce budget provisions that provide continued operating funding and RICAP support for the 195 District, as well as an extension of the 195 Project Fund's sunset. These measures ensure stability and continuity at a time when the District is entering its next phase of development. Sustained operating support allows the District to manage complex development projects, steward public assets, and maintain momentum, while the sunset extension ensures the state can fully realize the long-term value of its investment.

We appreciate your leadership and the Committee's thoughtful consideration of these investments. The Commission looks forward to continuing to partner with the General Assembly to ensure the 195 District remains a catalyst for innovation and opportunity across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of Rhode Island's economic future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Crisafulli', written over a light blue grid background.

Marc Crisafulli
Chair
I-195 Redevelopment District Commission