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Testimony in support of S 2447

May 5, 2026

Honorable Chairperson DiPalma and the members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am the founder and president of Eat Drink RI, one of the top media and marketing companies in the region for all things culinary. As an advocate for our food system, a small business owner who wants to see our state's food and drink economy thrive, and as a citizen concerned about our changing climate and food insecurity, **I strongly support S 2447.**

Rhode Island's 2025 food insecurity rate was reported at 38%, 24.5% higher than the national average. ReFED reports that 43% of Rhode Island's surplus food was produced by industry sectors in 2023 (farms, foodservice, manufacturing and retail businesses), accounting for 112 million pounds of unused food. Of this, only 3% was donated while 60,000 tons of that surplus food fed the landfill.

Food donation will also lessen impacts caused by food spoilage in RI landfills by reducing methane gasses, 25 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide; and extend the life of the Central Landfill, projected to reach capacity by 2040.

Increasing food donation of both excess and non-excess food is critical to make Rhode Island 100% food secure with 0% food loss, aligning with the White House National Strategy goal to end hunger by 2030 and the Draft National Strategy for Reducing Food Loss and Waste to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions; save households and businesses money; and build cleaner, healthier communities."

Thank you to Senator Kallman and her co-sponsors on S 2447. Respectfully, I urge you to pass S 2447 forward to the full Senate for passage this session. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Dadekian