



Jay G. Wegimont
Town Council Member

Town of South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Town Hall ▪ 180 High Street ▪ Wakefield, RI 02879

jwegimont@southkingstownri.gov
www.southkingstownri.gov
Tel (401) 789-9331 x1239

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The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for S2676, Appropriation to the Main Street Rhode Island Program

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing in my capacity as a member of the South Kingstown Town Council to express my strong support for S2676, which would provide a \$150,000 appropriation to the Main Street Rhode Island Program for Fiscal Year 2027.

Main Street Rhode Island has already proven to be a meaningful and practical resource for communities across our state. In South Kingstown, Wakefield's participation in the Main Street Rhode Island learning cohort has helped support important conversations about how we strengthen our village centers, support small businesses, improve walkability, address vacancies, and preserve the character that makes our community special.

Wakefield is one of South Kingstown's most important economic and civic centers. It is home to local businesses, restaurants, arts organizations, historic buildings, public spaces, and gathering places that residents rely on and visitors enjoy. Like many Main Street districts across Rhode Island, Wakefield's continued success depends on thoughtful planning, strong partnerships, and steady support. Main Street Rhode Island helps provide that structure.

Through the cohort, local leaders have been able to learn from the Main Street America model and apply those lessons directly to our community. The program has helped bring together municipal officials, business owners, community organizations, and local stakeholders around shared goals. That kind of coordination matters because it helps communities move from good intentions to real strategies.

This is exactly the type of economic development Rhode Island should continue to support. Strengthening our Main Streets helps small businesses, improves local tax bases, supports tourism, encourages private investment, and makes our communities more vibrant and livable. These investments show up in storefronts, sidewalks, local events, business retention, and the daily life of our neighborhoods.

Continued state support is especially important because this work is still building momentum. The first year of the pilot has helped communities like Wakefield begin moving from learning to

action. Continued funding will help sustain that progress and ensure that communities across Rhode Island can keep benefiting from technical assistance, training, peer learning, and the statewide Main Street network.

Rhode Island's Main Streets are among our greatest assets. They reflect our history, our local economy, and our sense of community. In South Kingstown, we know how important places like Wakefield are to the overall health and identity of the town. Supporting Main Street Rhode Island is a smart, targeted investment in communities that are already working hard to strengthen themselves from the ground up.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Senate Finance Committee to approve S2676 and support the \$150,000 appropriation for Main Street Rhode Island in Fiscal Year 2027.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jay G. Wegimont

South Kingstown Town Councilmember
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