



## Rhode Island Convention Center Authority

May 21, 2026

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

Dear Senator DiPalma,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Commissioners of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority to respectfully express strong opposition to proposed legislation S2814. This proposed legislation would reduce the amount of proceeds generated by the hotel tax given to the Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau (“PWCVB”) and transfer those proceeds to the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation instead.

The PWCVB serves as the primary long term business development arm of the Rhode Island Convention Center (“RICC”). They are responsible for selling and booking large-scale events that occur eighteen months and longer in the future. Through their Sports Commission division, the PWCVB also secures events that take place at the Amica Mutual Pavilion (“AMP”) including all NCAA sponsored events like basketball, hockey and wrestling.

The events secured by the PWCVB and Sports Commission represent major impacts to Rhode Island’s economy. As the backbone to our long-term sales, they are directly responsible for filling our buildings with visitors from all over the United States and countries around the world. On an annual basis, the PWCVB directly accounts for 50% of the RICC’s annual sales revenue and is responsible for events that utilize the building 250 days each calendar year. Their efforts fill the building 70% of the entire calendar year! In addition, over a quarter of a million people pass through the RICC each year. The PWCVB is responsible for 57%, or 145,000 people visiting the State due to activities at the RICC. Those people stay in our hotels, eat at our local restaurants and consume services provided by businesses and citizens of the State.

The efforts described above generate nearly \$70 million in economic impact to the City of Providence and State through the RICC and AMP. And from a job creation standpoint, their endeavors generate approximately 470 part-time and full-time jobs for people throughout Rhode Island.

With results such as these, any bill aimed at reducing the PWCVB’s resources is not in our best interest, nor is it in the best interest of the State. The PWCVB’s impact is felt far

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beyond the buildings' locations; it touches those in all corners of the State. Each dollar of revenue generated by the PWCVB's efforts for the Authority results in a multiple of 7.5 times on the economy. Senate bill S2814 presents a clear challenge to the resources of the PWCVB which will certainly have a dramatic impact on their ability to truly move the needle when it comes to tourism and convention activity in the State.

The Authority and PWCVB have a favorite saying – that we punch far above our weight when competing against larger, better funded cities throughout the United States. The Authority implores the Senate to allow the PWCVB to keep punching above its weight by not tying one of its hands behind its back.

To be clear and to affirm our position, the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority unequivocally opposes Senate bill S2814.

Very truly yours,

*Daniel P. McConaghy*

Daniel P. McConaghy  
Executive Director & CEO  
Rhode Island Convention Center Authority