

May 21, 2026

The Honorable Louis DiPalma  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the RI Hospitality Association, I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to S 2814.

Rhode Island's tourism economy is one of the state's most important economic drivers, supporting thousands of jobs across hotels, restaurants, attractions, and small businesses in every region. A key component of that success is the coordinated, strategic use of hotel tax revenues to attract visitors, conventions, and large-scale events.

This legislation would significantly alter the current distribution formula in a way that reduces funding for the Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau. The PWCVB plays a critical, statewide role in driving tourism and economic activity. In addition to its destination marketing efforts, the organization operates the Rhode Island Convention Center and the Veterans Memorial Auditorium, and manages the Rhode Island Sports Commission, entities that collectively bring major events, conferences, and tournaments to our state.

These events do not just benefit Providence and Warwick. They generate economic activity that extends throughout Rhode Island. Visitors attending conventions and sporting events stay in hotels, dine in restaurants, and visit attractions across multiple communities, including Aquidneck Island, South County, and beyond. Weakening the PWCVB's funding undermines the very engine that drives this statewide impact.


If Rhode Island reduces its commitment to the PWCVB, we risk losing market share, visitors, and the associated revenue that supports both local businesses and municipal budgets.


It is also important to recognize that the current funding structure is designed to create a balanced ecosystem, one that supports local tourism districts while also maintaining a strong, centralized entity capable of attracting large-scale business to the state. Disrupting that balance could have unintended consequences for the entire hospitality industry.

For these reasons, the RI Hospitality Association respectfully urges the Committee to oppose S 2814 and to preserve the existing funding structure that has helped make tourism a cornerstone of our state's economy.  
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ryan Moot  
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