



Mayor of Providence

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Brett P. Smiley

May 12, 2026

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

Dear Chair DiPalma and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I support Senate Resolution 3016, which would authorize an appropriation of \$800,000 to WaterFire Providence.

WaterFire is one of Rhode Island's most significant economic assets, generating millions in tax revenue for the State and supporting over 1,000 jobs. These impacts are felt directly in the City of Providence. The organization attracts approximately one million visitors annually, bringing foot traffic that supports local restaurants, hotels and small businesses while boosting the City's creative economy. WaterFire also offers programs that support workforce and artist development and provides space for local arts groups, supporting Providence's cultural and economic vitality.

The City of Providence remains committed to supporting WaterFire. In 2025, the City signed a twenty-year lease which keeps the WaterFire Arts Center in City ownership while giving WaterFire full use of the facility to host its programs and events.

WaterFire's landmark events are free to the public. The organization is not earning revenue from ticket sales. This combined with rising operating costs and shifts in private sponsorship have all placed increasing pressure on the organization's financial sustainability.

This \$800,000 investment is critical to help ensure that WaterFire remains a reliable driver of tourism and continues to contribute to Rhode Island's economic competitiveness.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support Senate Resolution 3016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett P. Smiley".

Brett P. Smiley  
Mayor