

May 12, 2026

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

Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the RI Hospitality Association, I write in strong support of S 3213, authorizing a \$18 million bond referendum to fund capital improvements at the Roger Williams Park Zoo.

As the unified voice of Rhode Island's hospitality and tourism industry, we strongly support strategic investments that enhance our state's ability to attract visitors and drive economic activity. The Zoo is a cornerstone attraction within and plays a critical role in bringing families, school groups, and tourists into Providence and the surrounding communities.

The improvements outlined in this legislation will significantly strengthen the Zoo's appeal as a destination. These upgrades will not only improve the guest experience but also extend visitation beyond peak seasons, helping to drive consistent, year-round economic activity for nearby restaurants, hotels, and small businesses.

Tourism is a key economic engine for Rhode Island, and investments like this have a ripple effect across the entire hospitality sector. Increased visitation to the Zoo translates directly into more hotel stays, more restaurant traffic, and greater spending at local businesses. Supporting destinations like the Zoo is essential to maintaining Rhode Island's competitiveness in the regional tourism market.


In addition to its economic benefits, the Zoo provides meaningful educational and recreational opportunities for Rhode Islanders of all ages. Enhancing these facilities ensures that the Zoo can continue to serve as a valuable community asset while advancing its mission of conservation and education.

S 3213 represents a smart, forward-looking investment in one of our state's most important attractions. RIHA respectfully urges the Committee to support this legislation and allow Rhode Island voters the opportunity to approve this critical funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Ryan Moot
Manager of Government Affairs
Rhode Island Hospitality Association

 94 Sabra Street
Cranston, RI 02910

 401-223-1120

 401-223-1123

 www.RIHospitality.org

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