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March 4, 2025

The Honorable John P. Burke, Chair
Senate Committee on Labor and Gaming
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

S 2320 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety -- Division of Occupational Health

Dear Chair Burke:

Please accept this letter on S 2320, legislation that would require employers to protect employees from extreme temperatures through rest breaks, personal protective equipment (PPE), training, and equipment; and mandate training to recognize and mitigate heat and cold-related risks. The Act would require the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to establish and implement the training program. The Act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

Although RIDOH applauds the intent of the legislation, it is unable to create and implement the online public tutorial program for supervisors and managers to recognize the signs of overexposure to hot and cold temperatures and ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is available, including hats, gloves, winter coats, cooling vests, and sunscreen, as appropriate for the extreme temperatures without adequate funding resources. Specifically, RIDOH would need resources to fund a subject matter expert FTE and a communications vendor to develop, implement, and maintain the online public tutorial program. RIDOH also suggests extending the effective date to July 1, 2028, to allow RIDOH to solicit a vendor through the State's procurement process and do the necessary work required by the legislation. RIDOH estimates that for Year One, RIDOH will require one FTE at a cost of about \$120,000 for salary and fringe, which RIDOH anticipates could be reduced to a .20 FTE in subsequent years. The communications vendor costs in Year One for the online tutorial development and implementation would range from \$30,000-\$60,000 for start-up, subject to change for Year One.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation and would be happy to work with the sponsor(s) and members of the Committee to propose amendments and/or to identify the resources needed to implement the actions included in the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome M. Larkin".

Jerome M. Larkin, MD
Director

CC:

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Gaming
The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Kristen Silvia, Director of Legislation and Deputy Chief of Staff
Patricia Resende, Director of Senate Policy
