



March 26, 2024

**The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chairman, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903**

RE: H.7688, An Act RELATING TO TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT, Redirects the distribution of the hotel tax money generated in the South County regional tourism district

Dear Chairman Abney and Committee Members:

The North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce extends its full support for the passage of H.7688, An Act Relating to Tourism and Development. This legislation proposes to redirect the distribution of hotel tax money generated within the South County regional tourism district in Rhode Island.

Initially enacted in 1995 to address the shortage of hotel accommodations in Providence for large conventions, the rationale behind this legislation has evolved significantly over the past twenty-nine years. Providence has made remarkable strides in expanding its hotel capacity and has established additional revenue streams through initiatives such as the Tourism Improvement District. Consequently, the original necessity for diverting hotel tax revenue from our region (South County) to the Providence Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau has become obsolete.

The South County Tourism Council has consistently broadened its range of offerings, including off-season events like the International Atlantis Rising Sand Sculpting Competition and the creation of the Rhode Island Troll Trail. Furthermore, chambers of commerce throughout the South County region, including ours, actively collaborate with the South County Tourism Council to curate seasonal programs and events.

H.7688 presents a fair and equitable solution by redirecting hotel tax revenue back to South County. This redirection will empower the South County Tourism Council to effectively develop and program our region.

For these compelling reasons, we support the passage of H.7990.

Sincerely,

The North Kingstown Chamber of Commerce
A Airline Express Limousine and Car Service, Inc
Down Home Events
Historic New England / Watson Farm
Historic New England/ Casey Farm
Joseph Denhoff Associates
Narrow River Kayaks, LLC
North Koffee
OTEC Precision Finish, Inc.
R&D Technologies, Inc.
Shaidzon Beer Company
STSound
West Passage Brewing Co.- Brewery/Restaurant
Wickford Art Association and Wickford Art Festival (Attracts 20K+ attendees for 61 years annually to Wickford in July and 200 fine artists from across the state and country)