



## Rhode Island Convention Center Authority

March 28, 2024

To the Honorable Marvin Abney and the Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 7688, which is projected to cut hotel tax revenue income of the Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau (PWCVB), slashing its ability to carry out the responsibilities for which it is charged.

The Rhode Island Convention Center Authority (RICCA) works closely with the PWCVB to book meetings, conventions and sporting events that bring thousands of visitors to the state, fill local hotels and infuse millions of dollars into the economy. The PWCVB's work is crucial to the success of the RICCA and, in turn, its benefit to the state of Rhode Island.

In FY23, the PWCVB and its subsidiary, the Rhode Island Sports Commission, booked 63 events at the RI Convention Center alone, attracting more than 220,000 people and resulting in almost \$70 million in direct spending for Rhode Island. That money flows into hotels, restaurants, retail outlets, transportation companies, and other small businesses throughout the state.

FY23 was the best-performing fiscal year of all time, with the PWCVB booking more events with more hotel nights, leading to a higher direct spend for our economy. The Rhode Island hospitality industry will not fully recover without this complete rebound of meetings, conventions, and sporting events. Locally, we have witnessed the impact on the community when the Convention Center complex is not fully operational.

The market is more competitive than it has ever been, as cities across the country vie for business that will hasten their economic recovery. The PWCVB needs the tools to continue this economic recovery and support the hospitality sector statewide.

We urge you to help continue this upwards trajectory and not support this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. McConaghy", is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel P. McConaghy  
Executive Director