



**Chair, Representative Marvin L. Abney**  
**First Vice Chair, Representative Scott A. Slater**  
**Second Vice Chair, Representative Alex Marszalkowski**  
**Distinguished members of the Rhode Island House Finance Committee**

**Support for 2025 H6001 - RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

As an organization that has dedicated four decades of work to honoring the history and culture of Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley (also known as the Northern Rhode Island Tourism District), Blackstone Valley Tourism Council supports H6001.

We love the ability to work in partnership with all of the tourism districts and statewide tourism. Over the last few years, RI Commerce has had funding to support innovative programs and events that drive attention and tourism to our state. In 2023, Blackstone Valley was able to create an *International Food Trail* that highlights the diversity of authentic culinary offerings found in our region. The opportunity to feature these small businesses has had a remarkable public response and is one of the most popular print and digital materials Blackstone Valley Tourism Council produces. Unfortunately, this funding source is no longer available as it came from the federal government so we must look at new and sustainable ways to continue to grow our tourism economy.

Readjusting the tax distribution to better fund RI Commerce Corporation for the purpose of tourism development, public art and events throughout the regions will continue to motivate catalytic change in all areas of the state and for them to thrive. With marquee events - World Cup and America 250 - coming in 2026, it is imperative that Blackstone Valley has the ability to do our work to showcase the region and the state. We are home to Rhode Island's professional soccer club and stadium. We are home to the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park. We are home to some of the most diverse cities and largest populations of excited soccer fans. We are home to several of the most important historic sites in the Ocean State. Rhode Island shouldn't miss these once-in-a-generation opportunities in all corners of the state. Therefore I urge you to pass H6001.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**James Toomey**  
Executive Director  
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

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