

March 12, 2020

The Honorable William J. Conley, Jr.
Chairperson, Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairperson Conley,

We are writing on behalf of the I-195 Redevelopment District (“District”) regarding Senate Bill No. 2337, specifically on *Section 9. Naming rights agreement*. We would like to extend our appreciation to Twin River Worldwide Holdings, Inc. (“TRWH”) for their proposal regarding naming rights. As we look to open the new park in the developing Providence Innovation and Design District, private sector financial support has the potential to help us meet our goals of having a vibrant, safe, and well-maintained open space.

The District engaged a national urban park expert to review the naming rights proposal. This review raised several issues and concerns that we feel are extremely important when considering this bill:

- As drafted, the current legislation dictates an agreement for a set price for naming rights for 23 years. This term far exceeds the market standard and results in an inability for the state to capitalize on the increase in value of naming rights over time. The District has been advised that the value of naming rights can be expected to rise dramatically after the initial years of operation, and that the initial term should be structured with this in mind.
- There is an opportunity cost associated with naming an entire park after one corporation, diluting the value of other naming opportunities. We have been advised that it could be more economically beneficial to seek sponsors for specific assets or events (e.g., a season of events, food concessions, etc.).
- The current legislation would significantly limit negotiating power of the District by dictating a price for the naming rights without consideration to the sponsor’s resulting privileges received in exchange.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide commentary on this important question. We want to reiterate our gratitude for the proposed naming rights agreement and our openness to continue the discussion.

Please do not hesitate to contact us further.

Sincerely,



Caroline Skuncik
Executive Director



Robert C. Davis
Chairman