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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- THE RHODE ISLAND LIFE SCIENCE HUB
ACT

Introduced By: Representatives Baginski, and Slater

Date Introduced: May 06, 2026

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 23-99-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-99 entitled "The Rhode
2 Island Life Science Hub Act" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **23-99-4. Rhode Island life science hub established.**

4 (a) There is hereby constituted as an independent public a public corporation for the
5 purposes set forth in this chapter with a separate legal existence from the state to be known as the
6 Rhode Island life science hub hereinafter to be referred to as the "hub". The exercise by the hub of
7 the powers conferred by this chapter shall be considered to be the performance of an essential
8 governmental function and the hub shall be considered a "constituted authority" and an
9 "instrumentality" of the state acting on behalf of the state for federal tax purposes.

10 (b) The hub shall be governed and its corporate powers exercised by a board of directors
11 consisting of ~~sixteen (16)~~ seventeen (17) directors: fifteen (15) of whom shall be appointed by the
12 governor, ~~and~~ one of whom shall be the person the board hires from time to time as president and
13 chief executive officer of the hub, and one of whom shall be the chairperson of the I-195
14 redevelopment district commission. The president and chief executive officer of the hub shall serve
15 ex officio and, except as otherwise provided in subsection (k) of this section, shall not be a voting
16 member of the board of directors. The chairperson of the I-195 redevelopment district commission
17 shall serve ex officio and shall not be a voting member of the board of directors. The fifteen (15)
18 directors appointed by the governor shall consist of seven (7) public directors and eight (8)

1 institutional directors. The seven (7) public directors shall have the following qualifications: one
2 shall be a senior executive with extensive background in the banking, grant making, or fundraising
3 fields, or their designee; one shall be a member of a life science trade association, or their designee;
4 one shall be the president or a senior executive of a Rhode Island based life science company, or
5 their designee; two (2) shall be senior executives of Rhode Island based life science companies
6 specializing in biomanufacturing, or their designees; one shall be a representative of organized
7 labor, or their designee; and one shall be a member of the public who shall be a certified public
8 accountant and a member of the Rhode Island society of certified public accountants, or their
9 designee. The eight (8) institutional directors shall have the following qualifications: one shall be
10 the secretary of commerce, ex officio; three (3) shall be the president of Rhode Island college, ex
11 officio, or their designee, the president of the university of Rhode Island, ex officio, or their
12 designee, and the president of Brown university, ex officio, or their designee; one shall be the dean
13 of the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown university, ex officio, or their designee; one shall
14 be the president and chief executive officer of Brown university health, ex officio, or their designee;
15 one shall be the president and chief executive officer of Care New England Health System, ex
16 officio, or their designee; and one shall be the director of economic development for the city of
17 Providence, ex officio, or their designee. To the extent that an institution takes on a new legal name,
18 the institutional director shall continue to serve as an institutional director without the need for
19 reappointment. To the extent that an institution merges, converts, consolidates with, or sells or
20 transfers all or substantially all of its assets to another company and such company retains its
21 primary operations in the state, the chief executive officer of such company shall be qualified for
22 appointment as an institutional director in accordance with this section.

23 (c) The chair of the board shall be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent
24 of the senate, and shall be an individual who served in the capacity as a senior executive with
25 extensive background in the banking, grant making, or fundraising fields. The vice-chair of the
26 board shall be the secretary of commerce. All directors, including ex officio directors, shall be
27 voting members of the board of directors, except for the director serving as president and chief
28 executive officer of the hub, who shall not be a voting member of the board. Eight (8) voting
29 directors shall constitute a quorum, and any action to be taken by the board under the provisions of
30 this chapter may be authorized by resolution approved by a majority of the directors present and
31 entitled to vote at any regular or special meeting at which a quorum is present. No votes on the
32 certification of any life science company nor on the allocation or award of any investment fund
33 resources to any certified life science company shall be taken unless the chair is present and voting.
34 A vacancy in the membership of the board of directors shall not impair the right of a quorum to

1 exercise all of the rights and perform all of the duties of the board. Pursuant to § 42-46-5(b)(6),
2 board directors are authorized to participate remotely using videoconferencing technology in open
3 public meetings of the board; provided, however, that:

4 (1) The remote director(s) and all persons present at the meeting location are clearly audible
5 and visible to each other;

6 (2) A quorum of the body is participating, either in person or by the use of remote
7 videoconferencing technology;

8 (3) A voting director who participates in a meeting of the board remotely shall be
9 considered present for purposes of a quorum and voting;

10 (4) If videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the public notice for the meeting
11 shall inform the public that videoconferencing will be used and include instructions on how the
12 public can access the virtual meeting; and

13 (5) The board shall adopt rules defining the requirements of remote participation including
14 its use for executive session, and the conditions by which a director is authorized to participate
15 remotely.

16 (d) Each public director shall serve an initial term of four (4) years. At the expiration of the
17 initial terms of public directors in January 2028, the governor shall appoint two (2) directors for a
18 term of four (4) years, two (2) directors for a term of three (3) years, two (2) directors for a term of
19 two (2) years, and one director for a term of one year. Thereafter, the governor shall appoint a new
20 public director or directors to succeed the public director or directors whose terms then next expire,
21 to serve a term of four (4) years. The president and chief executive officer shall have a board term
22 coextensive with such person's employment contract with the hub. In the event that the chair of the
23 board position becomes vacant for any reason, or the chair is not able to perform the duties of that
24 position for any reason, the vice chair shall serve as the interim chair until the chair is able to resume
25 the chair's duties; provided, however, in the event that the chair is not able to resume the chair's
26 duties in that position, the governor shall appoint a new chair and, in making this appointment, the
27 governor shall give due consideration to appointing an individual from a list of six (6) candidates,
28 three (3) of whom shall be provided to the governor by the speaker of the house and three (3) of
29 whom shall be provided to the governor by the president of the senate. Any person appointed to fill
30 a vacancy in the office of a public director of the board shall be appointed in a like manner and
31 shall serve for the unexpired term of such public director. Any director shall be eligible for
32 reappointment.

33 (e) The public director who is a certified public accountant and a member of the Rhode
34 Island society of certified public accountants shall serve as treasurer and shall be charged with

1 keeping the funds, books of account, and accounting records of the hub. No grants, loans or other
2 financings, or incentives shall be issued by the hub to any certified life science company without
3 the approval of the board. The board shall annually elect a secretary who shall keep a record of the
4 proceedings of the board and shall be custodian of all books, documents, and papers.

5 (f) Board directors, other than the director who serves as the president and chief executive
6 officer of the hub, shall serve without compensation, but each director shall be entitled to
7 reimbursement for actual, reasonable, and necessary expenses while engaged in the performance
8 of official duties. Board directors, officers, and employees shall not be liable to the state, the hub,
9 or to any other person as a result of their activities except for malfeasance in office or intentional
10 violations of law.

11 (g) The board shall establish an application review committee consisting of not less than
12 three (3) directors of the board, which shall review certification proposals submitted by life sciences
13 companies that shall be supported by independently verifiable information, and the board shall
14 make a record of findings based on the certification proposal, documents submitted therewith, and
15 any additional evidence that the life science company meets all criteria that the hub may prescribe.

16 (h) Certified life science companies shall be eligible to receive funding from the hub, upon
17 a majority vote of the board, for the following benefits which shall be awarded by the board on a
18 competitive basis:

- 19 (1) Grants, loans, or other investments;
- 20 (2) Assistance from the hub in obtaining federal, state, and nonprofit monies; or
- 21 (3) Assistance from the hub in facilitating clinical trials.

22 (i) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law in relation to their tenure of office, the
23 governor may remove any director, including institutional directors, for the neglect of any duty
24 required by law, incompetence, unprofessional conduct, or willful misconduct. If an institutional
25 director is so removed, such institutional director's designee shall serve on the board in their place
26 for the remainder of their term.

27 (j) Each director shall make full disclosure, in accordance with §§ 36-14-1 — 36-14-7, of
28 any financial interest, if any, in any matter before the board. Such interest must be disclosed in
29 advance to the directors of the board, recorded in the minutes of the board, and the director having
30 such an interest shall recuse themselves and shall not participate in any decision of the board
31 relating to such interest.

32 (k) With the advice and consent of the senate, the board shall have the power to hire a
33 president, who shall also serve as the chief executive officer of the hub and who shall be a non-
34 voting member of the board of directors, but who shall be entitled to vote as a member of any

1 advisory committee to which the president/chief executive officer is appointed. The board also shall
2 have the power to establish compensation and conditions of employment for the president and chief
3 executive officer; provided, further, the board shall have the power to hire other employees and
4 establish compensation and conditions of employment for such employees.

5 (l) The commerce corporation shall provide operating quarters for the hub for, at a
6 minimum, the first year of the hub's operation.

7 (m) In addition to the application review committee, the board may establish one or more
8 advisory committees, each consisting of not less than three (3) and not more than seven (7)
9 directors, which may also include persons who are not directors, which committees shall support
10 the board on science, technology, and other matters. Such advisory committees shall keep records
11 of their findings and recommendations.

12 (n) The hub shall continue as long as it shall have bonds outstanding and until its existence
13 is terminated by law. Upon the termination of the existence of the hub, all right, title, and interest
14 in and to all of its assets and all of its obligations, duties, covenants, agreements, and obligations
15 shall vest in and be possessed, performed, and assumed by the state and no part of the earnings of
16 the hub shall inure to the benefit of any private person.

17 SECTION 2. Section 42-64.14-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-64.14 entitled "The I-
18 195 Redevelopment Act of 2011" is hereby amended to read as follows:

19 **42-64.14-6. The I-195 redevelopment district commission.**

20 (a) The powers of the district to achieve the purposes of this chapter shall be exercised by
21 a commission as herein provided:

22 The I-195 redevelopment district commission shall consist of seven (7) voting members.
23 The governor of the State of Rhode Island shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the senate,
24 the seven (7) voting members of the commission.

25 The mayor of the city of Providence shall, within thirty (30) days of passage of this act,
26 submit to the governor a list of names of at least six (6) individuals that the governor shall give due
27 consideration to appointing three (3) individuals from the list. The speaker of the house of
28 representatives shall, within thirty (30) days of passage of this act, submit to the governor a list of
29 names of three (3) individuals of which the governor shall give due consideration to appointing one
30 individual from the list. The governor shall also appoint three (3) individuals without regard to the
31 lists submitted by the mayor of the city of Providence or the speaker of the house of representatives
32 and the governor shall designate one of the members to serve as chairperson of the commission.
33 The governor shall, within forty (40) days of passage of this act, submit to the senate for advice
34 and consent the initial list of individuals for appointment to the commission including any

1 individuals appointed by the governor from the lists presented by the mayor of the city of
2 Providence and the speaker of the house of representatives within the time limits set forth in this
3 subsection.

4 Three (3) members shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years; three (3) members shall
5 be appointed for a term of three (3) years; and one member, who shall be the chair, shall be
6 appointed for a term of four (4) years. Appointments made thereafter shall be for four-year (4)
7 terms. Any vacancy occurring in the commission shall be filled by the governor of the State of
8 Rhode Island in the same manner prescribed for the original appointments, including those seats
9 by recommendation of the mayor of the city of Providence and the speaker of the house of
10 representatives being selected from a similar prepared list from those parties. A member appointed
11 to fill a vacancy of a director appointed by the governor of the State of Rhode Island shall be
12 appointed for the unexpired portion of the term of office of the member whose vacancy is to be
13 filled. Members of the commission whose terms expire shall continue to serve until their successors
14 are appointed and qualified.

15 In addition to these voting members, there shall be ~~two (2)~~ three (3) ex officio, non-voting
16 members as follows: the city of Providence planning director, or the planning director's designee,
17 and the chief executive officer of the Rhode Island commerce corporation, or the chief executive
18 officer's designee and the chair of the Rhode Island life sciences hub.

19 (b) The commissioners shall receive no compensation for the performance of their duties
20 under this chapter, but each commissioner may be reimbursed for the commissioner's reasonable
21 expenses incurred in carrying out those duties, however said reimbursement must be approved at a
22 public meeting of the commission. A commissioner may engage in private employment, or in a
23 profession or business.

24 (c) The chairperson shall designate a vice chairperson from the commission who shall serve
25 at the pleasure of the chairperson. Four (4) voting commissioners shall constitute a quorum, and
26 any action to be taken by the commission under the provisions of this chapter may be authorized
27 by resolution approved by a majority of the commissioners present and entitled to vote at any
28 regular or special meeting at which a quorum is present. A vacancy in the membership of the
29 commission shall not impair the right of a quorum to exercise all of the rights and perform all of
30 the duties of the commission. Notwithstanding anything in this chapter to the contrary, in the event
31 that a vacancy is not filled within thirty (30) days of such vacancy, a quorum shall be deemed to
32 exist with a majority of the then duly authorized voting commissioners present.

33 (d) The commission shall appoint a secretary and such additional officers and staff
34 members as they shall deem appropriate and shall determine the amount of reasonable

1 compensation, if any, each shall receive. The chair shall appoint the executive director with the
2 approval of the commission provided that the position of the executive director must be advertised
3 and the appointment must be approved at a public meeting of the commission. The commission
4 may vest in an executive director or the director's subordinates the authority to recommend
5 additional staff members and to determine the amount of compensation each individual shall
6 receive, which shall then be approved by the commission at a public meeting.

7 (e) No full-time employee shall during the period of the employee's employment by the
8 commission engage in any other private employment, profession, or business, except with the
9 approval of the commissioners.

10 (f) Any action taken by the commission under the provisions of this chapter may be
11 authorized by vote at any regular or special meeting, and each vote shall take effect immediately,
12 unless otherwise expressly indicated by the commission.

13 (g) Employees of the commission shall not, by reason of their employment, be deemed to
14 be employees of the state or the city for any purpose, any other provision of the general laws,
15 charter, or ordinance to the contrary notwithstanding, except for the provisions of the ethics code
16 as set forth in chapter 14 of title 36. Further, no employee of the commission shall be entitled to or
17 accrue pension benefits with the city of Providence or state during such employment.

18 (h) It shall be the responsibility of the commission to conduct a training course for newly
19 appointed and qualified members within six (6) months of their qualification. The training shall
20 encompass ethics, including the minimum applicable standards established in the code of ethics as
21 set forth in chapter 14 of title 36 ("code of ethics").

22 (i) The commission shall be subject to the provisions of the open meetings act contained in
23 chapter 46 of title 42 ("open meetings"); provided, however, weekends and state holidays shall be
24 excluded in the count of hours contained in §§ 42-46-6(b) and 42-46-6(c). Every meeting of the
25 commission shall be open unless it is closed pursuant to the exemptions as set forth in § 42-46-5,
26 with the following exceptions:

27 (1) For purposes of determining what constitutes a compliant closed or executive session,
28 the provisions as set forth in § 42-46-5(a)(5) shall not apply to the commission. However, an
29 additional exemption to those provided for in § 42-46-5, allowing for a closed or executive session,
30 shall apply to the commission in accordance with subsection (i)(2) of this section.

31 (2) To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if the commission
32 declares in open session that an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the negotiating
33 position of the commission with other parties to the negotiation; provided, however, any vote taken
34 in a closed session under this subsection, and any minutes of a closed session taken under this

1 subsection, shall be made public once the disclosure would no longer jeopardize the commission's
2 negotiating position.

3 (j) In every case where the commission holds a closed or executive session, an audio
4 recording of the closed session shall be made. The audio recording shall be kept as minutes in
5 accordance with § 42-46-7.

6 (k) The commission shall be subject to the provisions set forth in chapter 2 of title 38
7 ("access to public records").

8 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- THE RHODE ISLAND LIFE SCIENCE HUB
ACT

1 This act would amend the composition of the Rhode Island life science hub board of
2 directors by adding the chairperson of the I-195 redevelopment district commission to the board
3 and would amend the I-195 redevelopment district commission by adding the chair of the Rhode
4 Island life science hub to the commission.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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