

## Chris O'Brien

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**From:** Scott Ferguson <scotthferguson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 5, 2025 6:16 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Rep. Finkelman, Alex S.  
**Subject:** Strong Opposition to H6256 – Don't Undercut Rhode Island's Marine Economy

**Dear Chairperson and Members of the House Finance Committee,**  
Cc: Representative Alex Finkelman

I am writing to urge you to oppose **House Bill 6256**, which would repeal the sales and use tax exemption on boats in Rhode Island. As a lifelong Rhode Islander and the owner of both a **19-foot Boston Whaler** and a **J/35 sailboat**, I can tell you firsthand: this exemption isn't a loophole—it's a cornerstone of our **marine economy**, one of the most vibrant and essential sectors in *The Ocean State*.

Rhode Island's boat tax exemption has helped establish us as **the premier boating destination in New England**—drawing buyers, service customers, and marine jobs into our state from across the region. This policy has been a **success story**:

- It attracts **marine businesses**, brokers, and repair yards who know they can compete here.
- It pulls in **out-of-state dollars**—from boat purchases to marina stays, winter storage, repairs, and refits.
- It supports **thousands of Rhode Island jobs**, from high school apprentices to skilled tradespeople and small business owners.

Repealing this exemption would be a short-sighted move. It would not only increase my personal cost of ownership but also **cripple the competitive advantage** Rhode Island has spent decades building. We've seen what happens in other states that impose boat taxes: boats go elsewhere, jobs follow, and revenues fall—not rise.

I strongly urge you to vote against H6256. Let's continue to invest in Rhode Island's reputation as the heart of the Northeast boating world—not sink it for the illusion of a quick tax fix.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Scott Ferguson  
Jamestown, Rhode Island  
Boat Owner & Marine Industry Supporter