

## Chris O'Brien

---

**From:** wsulyma <wsulyma@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 5, 2025 3:17 PM  
**To:** House Finance Committee  
**Subject:** Oppose H6256 – Protect Rhode Island's Marine Economy  
**Attachments:** Oppose H6256 – Sulyma.docx

Dear Chairperson and Members of the House Finance Committee,

As a lifelong Rhode Island boater and resident, I strongly oppose House Bill H6256, which seeks to repeal the state's longstanding tax exemption on boats.

Rhode Island's decision in 1993 to eliminate the sales and use tax on boats and boating services was a visionary policy that revitalized our marine economy. Since then, we've seen the growth of marinas, boatyards, repair shops, sailmakers, and countless small businesses tied to recreational and commercial boating. Reinstating this tax would undo decades of progress, driving boaters and marine-related businesses to neighboring states like Connecticut and Massachusetts, where competitive incentives still exist.

Boaters are not just seasonal visitors — we are year-round contributors to the state's economy. We support local jobs, from dockhands to diesel mechanics to hospitality workers. According to industry estimates, the boating sector in Rhode Island supports over 13,000 jobs and contributes more than \$2 billion annually to the state's economy. H6256 threatens this economic engine and puts local livelihoods at risk.

Additionally, this tax will likely generate less revenue than expected. As we've seen in other states, taxing boats tends to push sales and service work out of state rather than capturing new revenue. The result is a net loss — not just in tax income but in economic activity, employment, and investment.

Rhode Island has earned its nickname as the "Ocean State" not just because of geography, but because of policy choices that supported and embraced our marine heritage. I urge you to continue that tradition by voting **NO on H6256**.

Please don't sink Rhode Island's marine industry. Protect our jobs, our small businesses, and our identity as a state that understands the value of its coastline and the people who make their living on it.

**Please vote NO on H6256.** Don't sink Rhode Island's marine industry.

Very Respectfully,

Walter Sulyma  
Warwick, RI