

D  **R** Rhode Island Department of Revenue
Division of Taxation

Via Electronic Mail

April 29, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Letter Regarding House Bill 8254 – An Act Relating to Taxation – Cigarette, Other Tobacco Products, and Electronic Nicotine-Delivery System Products

Dear Chair Abney:

I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Revenue, Division of Taxation (“Division”), to: i) express concerns regarding issues with proposed House Bill 8254 as currently drafted; ii) explain the background and current statutory context in order to clarify the intended and unintended consequences of this bill; and iii) make recommendations and request your support in implementing those recommendations.

This letter is not intended as a position in support of or opposition to the bill, but only as recommendations on drafting to provide clarity in the bill and to aid tax administration and compliance.

As you know, this bill would amend R.I. Gen. Laws § 44-20-61, entitled “Product restrictions on electronic nicotine-delivery system [ENDS] products,” to remove “menthol” from the list of exempted ENDS flavors, thereby including menthol as a “characterizing flavor” as defined in § 44-20-61. The bill is set to take effect upon passage.

The amendment to § 44-20-61(a)(1) intends to include menthol as a flavored ENDS product. However, there remains a reference to the menthol flavor exemption that was not deleted in the last line of § 44-20-61(a)(1), which may have been a drafting error.

The Division takes no position with respect to the remainder of the proposed legislation. Rather, the Division is concerned solely with the issues of clarity, tax compliance, and tax administration.

I look forward to working with you to address the issue raised in this letter and appreciate your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nsavage", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neena S. Savage
Tax Administrator

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
(via: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)
The Honorable Mary Duffy Messier (via: rep-messier@rilegislature.gov)
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy
Jane E. Cole, Interim Director, Department of Revenue