

April 29, 2026

House Finance Chair Marvin Abney – rep-abney@rilegislature.gov
Senate Finance Chair Louis DiPalma – sen-dipalma@rilegislature.gov
House: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov
Senate: SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov

Rhode Island General Assembly
Providence, RI

Dear Members of the Senate and House Finance Committees,

My name is Cheryl Merchant, and I previously served as President and CEO of Taco Comfort Solutions, a company proudly headquartered in Rhode Island for over a century.

I am writing to share a personal and professional decision that reflects a broader concern I believe deserves your attention.

After more than 25 years living and working in Rhode Island, I made the difficult decision to relocate my residency to New Hampshire. This was not a decision driven by lifestyle or preference—but by economics. Quite simply, the tax burden in Rhode Island has reached a point where it no longer made financial sense for me to remain a resident.

This is not a theoretical concern. It is a real-world example of how tax policy influences behavior.

Throughout my career, I have been deeply committed to Rhode Island—supporting its workforce, sitting on numerous Boards such as the GPCOC, EDC, RIPEC, RIMA, and multiple others, investing in its communities, and helping to grow a business that employs hundreds of people. Decisions like mine are not made lightly. But when the cost of staying outweighs the benefits, individuals—and businesses—begin to look elsewhere.

I share this not as criticism, but as a caution.

Rhode Island has so much to offer: a strong sense of community, a talented workforce, and a strategic location. But it also faces real competitive pressure from neighboring states. When policies increase the cost of living or doing business here, it becomes harder to retain and attract the very people who contribute most to the state's economic vitality.

I urge you to carefully consider the broader impact of tax policy decisions—particularly those that may unintentionally discourage investment, residency, and long-term commitment to Rhode Island.

We all want a thriving, growing Rhode Island. And that growth depends on creating an environment where individuals and businesses choose to stay, invest, and build their futures.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheryl Merchant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cheryl" being more prominent than the last name "Merchant".

Cheryl Merchant
Former President and CEO Taco Comfort Solutions