

Jamie Plume

From: Bradford Whitman <bfwhitma@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 6, 2026 6:42 PM
To: Senate Finance; Sen. DiMario, Alana; Sen. Sosnowski, V. Susan; Sen. DiPalma, Louis P.
Subject: S. 2682 Supertax on Owners Not Occupying Full-time

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Honorable Senators:

I think what has been missing from the debates leading up to S. 2682 is what I know as "ground truth." It is why judges sometimes insist on site visits before concluding a trial.

My family and I have resided for forty-six years less than full-time in a shingle cottage we built in 1980 in Jamestown on the coast. The house is little changed and has depreciated in assessed market value to an amount less than what we have put into it.

The house has 180 feet frontage on the Bay. is owned by the land trust under a very tight easement (my changes).

The result is optimum preservation of the natural coastline for all of the several values mandated by the General Assembly for this site under the Coastal Zone Management Program.

My career as an environmental attorney began when President Richard Nixon's Department of Justice hired eight original attorneys to represent in court the Environmental Protection Agency that he created by Executive Order and Congress legislated into existence. I am sending this letter particularly to Senators Sosnowski and DiMario whom I met remotely during a very long episode of pro bono advocacy on behalf of our effort to CRMC.

I have never practiced law in Rhode Island, although I did clerk at a Providence firm, and my family ties to RI go back a long way.

My great-grandfather built the flagship mill of our family textile company in Esmond, RI in 1905. It was a remarkable textile mill known widely for the quality and creativity of its products. You can Google "Esmond Mill" and Whitman. He was never a full-time RI resident, but if you ask the local librarians (as I did) whether he did good things for the State, you would be impressed by their answer and all the newspaper clippings.

My father hoped to carry on the company. His hopes were dashed by the collapse of this signature RI industry at the hands of cheap labor in the South. But he spent every summer of his life with us in a cottage on the Bay in North Kingstown.

Our U. S.-based children and families live an hour away from Jamestown, six hours from the domicile of myself and my wife. So much is spoken about re-establishing the American family. For the thousands of less than fulltime RI homeowners who value their times with family far more than any material object,

what a terrible blow a supertax would be if it worsens the already massive burden of real property taxes. This is the opposite of good government.

We spend a lot of time enjoying gorgeous RI and the Bay, doing our best to drive out invasive plant growth and renativizing the land, and seeing our life-long friends.

Should a Supertax be assessed on the Whitman family lot which would be on top of already staggering property taxes solely because we are not full-time residents and my law practice in Washington and Philadelphia led to a home base there?

Is that tax not blatantly unconstitutional under the Fourteenth Amendment?

It certainly appears to be so.

What would become of the coastline we are fighting so hard to "preserve and enhance," as the state law requires of CRMC and its successor"?

Surely, the Senate has eyes to see and a mind to judge. The coastal devastation in the last decade has been tragic.

RI really is unique. The impression given is that we have little or no ties, contribute nothing to and know nothing of the state and community. That is undoubtedly true of some landowners but certainly not a great many others like ourselves. Taxation that discriminates wrongly, arbitrarily, invidiously, and harmfully cannot and must not survive.

I deeply urge you to re-think who is being penalized and why and what the consequences are.

Respectfully,

Brad Whitman
343 Beavertail Road
Jamestown, RI 02835