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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2012

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A N A C T

RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

Introduced By: Representative Charlene Lima

Date Introduced: February 28, 2012

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 44-3-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 44-3 entitled "Property  
2 Subject to Taxation" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **44-3-3. Property exempt.** -- The following property is exempt from taxation:

4 ~~(1) Property belonging to the state except as provided in section 44-4-4.1;~~

5 ~~(2)~~(1) Lands ceded or belonging to the United States;

6 ~~(3)~~(2) Bonds and other securities issued and exempted from taxation by the government  
7 of the United States, or of this state;

8 ~~(4)~~(3) Real estate, used exclusively for military purposes, owned by chartered or  
9 incorporated organizations approved by the adjutant general, and composed of members of the  
10 national guard, the naval militia, or the independent chartered military organizations;

11 ~~(5)~~(4) Buildings for free public schools, buildings for religious worship, and the land  
12 upon which they stand and immediately surrounding them, to an extent not exceeding five (5)  
13 acres so far as the buildings and land are occupied and used exclusively for religious or  
14 educational purposes;

15 ~~(6)~~(5) Dwellings houses and the land on which they stand, not exceeding one acre in  
16 size, or the minimum lot size for zone in which the dwelling house is located, whichever is the  
17 greater, owned by or held in trust for any religious organization and actually used by its  
18 officiating clergy; provided, further that in the town of Charlestown, where the property  
19 previously described in this paragraph is exempt in total, along with dwelling houses and the land

1 on which they stand in Charlestown, not exceeding one acre in size, or the minimum lot size for  
2 zone in which the dwelling house is located, whichever is the greater, owned by or held in trust  
3 for any religious organization and actually used by its officiating clergy, or used as a convent,  
4 nunnery, or retreat center by its religious order.

5 ~~(7)~~(6) Intangible personal property owned by, or held in trust for, any religious or  
6 charitable organization, if the principal or income is used or appropriated for religious or  
7 charitable purposes;

8 ~~(8)~~(7) Buildings and personal estate owned by any corporation used for a school,  
9 academy, or seminary of learning, and of any incorporated public charitable institution, and the  
10 land upon which the buildings stand and immediately surrounding them to an extent not  
11 exceeding one acre, so far as they are used exclusively for educational purposes, but no property  
12 or estate whatever is hereafter exempt from taxation in any case where any part of its income or  
13 profits or of the business carried on there is divided among its owners or stockholders;

14 ~~(9)~~(8) Estates, persons, and families of the president and professors for the time being of  
15 Brown University for not more than ten thousand dollars (\$ 10,000) for each officer, the officer's  
16 estate, person, and family included, but only to the extent that any person had claimed and  
17 utilized the exemption prior to, and for a period ending either on or after December 31, 1996;

18 ~~(10)~~(9) Property especially exempt by charter unless the exemption has been waived in  
19 whole or in part.

20 ~~(11)~~(10) Lots of land exclusively for burial grounds;

21 ~~(12)~~(11) Property, real and personal, held for or by an incorporated library, society, or  
22 any free public library, or any free public library society, so far as the property is held exclusively  
23 for library purposes, or for the aid or support of the aged poor, or poor friendless children, or the  
24 poor generally, or for a hospital for the sick or disabled;

25 ~~(13)~~(12) Real or personal estate belonging to or held in trust for the benefit of  
26 incorporated organizations of veterans of any war in which the United States has been engaged,  
27 the parent body of which has been incorporated by act of congress, to the extent of four hundred  
28 thousand dollars (\$ 400,000) if actually used and occupied by the association; provided, that the  
29 city council of the city of Cranston may by ordinance exempt the real or personal estate as  
30 previously described in this subdivision located within the city of Cranston to the extent of five  
31 hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000);

32 ~~(14)~~(13) Property, real and personal, held for or by the fraternal corporation, association,  
33 or body created to build and maintain a building or buildings for its meetings or the meetings of  
34 the general assembly of its members, or subordinate bodies of the fraternity, and for the

1 accommodation of other fraternal bodies or associations, the entire net income of which real and  
2 personal property is exclusively applied or to be used to build, furnish, and maintain an asylum or  
3 asylums, a home or homes, a school or schools, for the free education or relief of the members of  
4 the fraternity, or the relief, support, and care of worthy and indigent members of the fraternity,  
5 their wives, widows, or orphans, and any fund given or held for the purpose of public education,  
6 almshouses, and the land and buildings used in connection therewith;

7 ~~(15)~~(14) Real estate and personal property of any incorporated volunteer fire engine  
8 company or incorporated volunteer ambulance or rescue corps in active service;

9 ~~(16)~~(15) The estate of any person who in the judgment of the assessors is unable from  
10 infirmity or poverty to pay the tax; providing, that in the town of Burrillville the tax shall  
11 constitute a lien for five (5) years on the property where the owner is entitled to the exemption. At  
12 the expiration of five (5) years, the lien shall be abated in full. Provided, if the property is sold or  
13 conveyed or if debt secured by the property is refinanced during the five (5) year period, the lien  
14 immediately becomes due and payable; any person claiming the exemption aggrieved by an  
15 adverse decision of an assessor shall appeal the decision to the local board of tax review, and  
16 thereafter according to the provisions of section 44-5-26;

17 ~~(17)~~(16) Household furniture and family stores of a housekeeper in the whole, including  
18 clothing, bedding, and other white goods, books, and all other tangible personal property items  
19 which are common to the normal household;

20 ~~(18)~~(17) Improvements made to any real property to provide a shelter and fallout  
21 protection from nuclear radiation, to the amount of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$ 1,500);  
22 provided, that the improvements meet applicable standards for shelter construction established  
23 from time to time by the Rhode Island emergency management agency. The improvements are  
24 deemed to comply with the provisions of any building code or ordinance with respect to the  
25 materials or the methods of construction used and any shelter or its establishment is deemed to  
26 comply with the provisions of any zoning code or ordinance;

27 ~~(19)~~(18) Aircraft for which the fee required by section 1-4-6 has been paid to the tax  
28 administrator;

29 ~~(20)~~(19) Manufacturer's inventory

30 (i) For the purposes of sections 44-4-10, 44-5-3, 44-5-20, and 44-5-38, a person is  
31 deemed to be a manufacturer within a city or town within this state if that person uses any  
32 premises, room, or place in it primarily for the purpose of transforming raw materials into a  
33 finished product for trade through any or all of the following operations: adapting, altering,  
34 finishing, making, and ornamenting; provided, that public utilities, non-regulated power

1 producers commencing commercial operation by selling electricity at retail or taking title to  
2 generating facilities on or after July 1, 1997, building and construction contractors, warehousing  
3 operations including distribution bases or outlets of out-of-state manufacturers, and fabricating  
4 processes incidental to warehousing or distribution of raw materials such as alteration of stock for  
5 the convenience of a customer, are excluded from this definition.

6 (ii) For the purposes of sections 44-3-3, 44-4-10, and 44-5-38, the term "manufacturer's  
7 inventory" or any similar term means and includes the manufacturer's raw materials, the  
8 manufacturer's work in process, and finished products manufactured by the manufacturer in this  
9 state, and not sold, leased, or traded by the manufacturer or its title or right to possession  
10 divested; provided, that the term does not include any finished products held by the manufacturer  
11 in any retail store or other similar selling place operated by the manufacturer whether or not the  
12 retail establishment is located in the same building in which the manufacturer operates the  
13 manufacturing plant.

14 (iii) For the purpose of section 44-11-2, a "manufacturer" is a person whose principal  
15 business in this state consists of transforming raw materials into a finished product for trade  
16 through any or all of the operations described in paragraph (i) of this subdivision. A person will  
17 be deemed to be principally engaged if the gross receipts which that person derived from the  
18 manufacturing operations in this state during the calendar year or fiscal year mentioned in section  
19 44-11-1 amounted to more than fifty percent (50%) of the total gross receipts which that person  
20 derived from all the business activities in which that person engaged in this state during the  
21 taxable year. For the purpose of computing the percentage, gross receipts derived by a  
22 manufacturer from the sale, lease, or rental of finished products manufactured by the  
23 manufacturer in this state, even though the manufacturer's store or other selling place may be at a  
24 different location from the location of the manufacturer's manufacturing plant in this state, are  
25 deemed to have been derived from manufacturing.

26 (iv) Within the meaning of the preceding paragraphs of this subdivision, the term  
27 "manufacturer" also includes persons who are principally engaged in any of the general activities  
28 coded and listed as establishments engaged in manufacturing in the standard industrial  
29 classification manual prepared by the technical committee on industrial classification, office of  
30 statistical standards, executive office of the president, United States bureau of the budget, as  
31 revised from time to time, but eliminating as manufacturers those persons, who, because of their  
32 limited type of manufacturing activities, are classified in the manual as falling within the trade  
33 rather than an industrial classification of manufacturers. Among those thus eliminated, and  
34 accordingly also excluded as manufacturers within the meaning of this paragraph, are persons

1 primarily engaged in selling, to the general public, products produced on the premises from which  
2 they are sold, such as neighborhood bakeries, candy stores, ice cream parlors, shade shops, and  
3 custom tailors, except, that a person who manufactures bakery products for sale primarily for  
4 home delivery, or through one or more non-baking retail outlets, and whether or not retail outlets  
5 are operated by person, is a manufacturer within the meaning of this paragraph.

6 (v) The term "Person" means and includes, as appropriate, a person, partnership, or  
7 corporation.

8 (vi) The department of revenue shall provide to the local assessors any assistance that is  
9 necessary in determining the proper application of the definitions in this subdivision.

10 ~~(21)~~(20) Real and tangible personal property acquired to provide a treatment facility  
11 used primarily to control the pollution or contamination of the waters or the air of the state, as  
12 defined in chapter 12 of title 46 and chapter 25 of title 23, respectively, the facility having been  
13 constructed, reconstructed, erected, installed, or acquired in furtherance of federal or state  
14 requirements or standards for the control of water or air pollution or contamination, and certified  
15 as approved in an order entered by the director of environmental management. The property is  
16 exempt as long as it is operated properly in compliance with the order of approval of the director  
17 of environmental management; provided, that any grant of the exemption by the director of  
18 environmental management in excess of ten (10) years is approved by the city or town in which  
19 the property is situated. This provision applies only to water and air pollution control properties  
20 and facilities installed for the treatment of waste waters and air contaminants resulting from  
21 industrial processing; furthermore, it applies only to water or air pollution control properties and  
22 facilities placed in operation for the first time after April 13, 1970;

23 ~~(22)~~(21) New manufacturing machinery and equipment acquired or used by a  
24 manufacturer and purchased after December 31, 1974. Manufacturing machinery and equipment  
25 is defined as:

26 (i) Machinery and equipment used exclusively in the actual manufacture or conversion  
27 of raw materials or goods in the process of manufacture by a manufacturer as defined in  
28 subdivision ~~(20)~~ (19) of this section, and machinery, fixtures, and equipment used exclusively by  
29 a manufacturer for research and development or for quality assurance of its manufactured  
30 products;

31 (ii) Machinery and equipment which is partially used in the actual manufacture or  
32 conversion of raw materials or goods in process of manufacture by a manufacturer as defined in  
33 subdivision ~~(20)~~ (19) of this section, and machinery, fixtures, and equipment used by a  
34 manufacturer for research and development or for quality assurance of its manufactured products,

1 to the extent to which the machinery and equipment is used for the manufacturing processes,  
2 research and development or quality assurance. In the instances where machinery and equipment  
3 is used in both manufacturing and/or research, and development, and/or quality assurance  
4 activities and non-manufacturing activities, the assessment on machinery and equipment is  
5 prorated by applying the percentage of usage of the equipment for the manufacturing, research,  
6 and development and quality assurance activity to the value of the machinery and equipment for  
7 purposes of taxation, and the portion of the value used for manufacturing, research, and  
8 development, and quality assurance is exempt from taxation. The burden of demonstrating this  
9 percentage usage of machinery and equipment for manufacturing and for research, and  
10 development and/or quality assurance of its manufactured products rests with the manufacturer;  
11 and

12 (iii) Machinery and equipment described in section 44-18-30(7) and (22) that was  
13 purchased after July 1, 1997; provided that the city or town council of the city or town in which  
14 the machinery and equipment is located adopts an ordinance exempting the machinery and  
15 equipment from taxation. For purposes of this subsection, city councils and town councils of any  
16 municipality may by ordinance wholly or partially exempt from taxation the machinery and  
17 equipment discussed in this subsection for the period of time established in the ordinance and  
18 may by ordinance establish the procedures for taxpayers to avail themselves of the benefit of any  
19 exemption permitted under this section; provided, that the ordinance does not apply to any  
20 machinery or equipment of a business, subsidiary or any affiliated business which locates or  
21 relocates from a city or town in this state to another city or town in the state.

22 ~~(23)~~(22) Precious metal bullion, meaning any elementary metal which has been put  
23 through a process of melting or refining, and which is in a state or condition that its value  
24 depends upon its content and not its form. The term does not include fabricated precious metal  
25 which has been processed or manufactured for some one or more specific and customary  
26 industrial, professional, or artistic uses;

27 ~~(24)~~(23) Hydroelectric power generation equipment, which includes, but is not limited  
28 to, turbines, generators, switchgear, controls, monitoring equipment, circuit breakers,  
29 transformers, protective relaying, bus bars, cables, connections, trash racks, headgates, and  
30 conduits. The hydroelectric power generation equipment must have been purchased after July 1,  
31 1979, and acquired or used by a person or corporation who owns or leases a dam and utilizes the  
32 equipment to generate hydroelectric power;

33 ~~(25)~~(24) Subject to authorization by formal action of the council of any city or town, any  
34 real or personal property owned by, held in trust for, or leased to an organization incorporated

1 under chapter 6 of title 7, as amended, or an organization meeting the definition of "charitable  
2 trust" set out in section 18-9-4, as amended, or an organization incorporated under the not for  
3 profits statutes of another state or the District of Columbia, the purpose of which is the  
4 conserving of open space, as that term is defined in chapter 36 of title 45, as amended, provided  
5 the property is used exclusively for the purposes of the organization;

6 ~~(26)~~(25) Tangible personal property, the primary function of which is the recycling,  
7 reuse, or recovery of materials (other than precious metals, as defined in section 44-18-30(24) (ii)  
8 and (iii)), from or the treatment of "hazardous wastes", as defined in section 23-19.1-4, where the  
9 "hazardous wastes" are generated primarily by the same taxpayer and where the personal property  
10 is located at, in, or adjacent to a generating facility of the taxpayer. The taxpayer may, but need  
11 not, procure an order from the director of the department of environmental management  
12 certifying that the tangible personal property has this function, which order effects a conclusive  
13 presumption that the tangible personal property qualifies for the exemption under this  
14 subdivision. If any information relating to secret processes or methods of manufacture,  
15 production, or treatment is disclosed to the department of environmental management only to  
16 procure an order, and is a "trade secret" as defined in section 28-21-10(b), it shall not be open to  
17 public inspection or publicly disclosed unless disclosure is otherwise required under chapter 21 of  
18 title 28 or chapter 24.4 of title 23;

19 ~~(27)~~(26) Motorboats as defined in section 46-22-2 for which the annual fee required in  
20 section 46-22-4 has been paid;

21 ~~(28)~~(27) Real and personal property of the Providence performing arts center, a non-  
22 business corporation as of December 31, 1986;

23 ~~(29)~~(28) Tangible personal property owned by, and used exclusively for the purposes of,  
24 any religious organization located in the city of Cranston;

25 ~~(30)~~(29) Real and personal property of the Travelers Aid Society of Rhode Island, a  
26 nonprofit corporation, the Union Mall Real Estate Corporation, and any limited partnership or  
27 limited liability company which is formed in connection with, or to facilitate the acquisition of,  
28 the Providence YMCA Building; and

29 ~~(31)~~(30) Real and personal property of Meeting Street Center or MSC Realty, Inc., both  
30 not-for-profit Rhode Island corporations, and any other corporation, limited partnership, or  
31 limited liability company which is formed in connection with, or to facilitate the acquisition of,  
32 the properties designated as the Meeting Street National Center of Excellence on Eddy Street in  
33 Providence, Rhode Island.

34 ~~(32)~~(31) The buildings, personal property and land upon which the buildings stand,

1 located on Pomham Island, East Providence, currently identified as Assessor's Map 211, Block  
2 01, Parcel 001.00, which consists of approximately twenty-one thousand three hundred (21,300)  
3 square feet and is located approximately eight hundred sixty feet (860'), more or less, from the  
4 shore, and limited exclusively to these said buildings personal estate and land, provided that said  
5 property is owned by a qualified 501(c)(3) organization, such as the American Lighthouse  
6 Foundation, and is used exclusively for a lighthouse.



1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO TAXATION -- PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION

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- 1           This act would remove state-owned property from the exemption from local property
- 2 taxes.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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