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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

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A N A C T

RELATING TO TAXATION - HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Introduced By: Representatives O'Grady, Ruggiero, Edwards, Guthrie, and Phillips

Date Introduced: May 01, 2013

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 44 of the General Laws entitled "TAXATION" is hereby amended by  
2 adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 33.6

4 HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS 2013

5 **44-33.6-1. Declaration of Purpose. --** The general assembly finds and declares that  
6 Rhode Island's historic structures continue to experience high vacancy rates and physical  
7 deterioration, particularly in Rhode Island's central business districts. Without adding economic  
8 incentive, these structures are not viable for the redevelopment and reuse by modern commercial,  
9 residential or manufacturing enterprises and will continue their physical deterioration. The  
10 redevelopment and reuse of these historic structures are of critical importance to the economic  
11 measures and will assist in stimulating the reuse and redevelopment of historic structures and will  
12 improve property values, foster civic beauty, create employment opportunities, enhance  
13 commerce, and promote public education, pleasure, and welfare. Furthermore, during this  
14 unprecedented economic climate, many in the building and construction trades, and related  
15 service industries, have been severely impacted. The redevelopment and reuse of these historic  
16 structures will serve as a vital catalyst in the recovery of these trades and services, in addition to  
17 stimulating various other related economic benefits and business activities. The purpose of this  
18 chapter is to create economic incentives for the purpose of stimulating the redevelopment and  
19 reuse of Rhode Island's historic structures, as well as to generate the positive economic and

1 employment activities that will result from such redevelopment and reuse.

2 **44-33.6-2. Definitions.** -- As used in this chapter:

3 (1) "Certified historic structure" means a property which is located in the state of Rhode  
4 Island and is:

5 (i) Listed individually on the national register of historic places; or

6 (ii) Listed individually in the state register of historic places; or

7 (iii) Located in a registered historic district and certified by either the commission or  
8 Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district.

9 (2) "Certified rehabilitation" means any rehabilitation of a certified historic structure  
10 consistent with the historic character of such property or the district in which the property is  
11 located as determined by the commission guidelines.

12 (3) "Substantial Construction" means that: (i) the owner of a certified historic structure  
13 has entered into a contract with the division of taxation and paid the processing fee; (ii) the  
14 commission has certified that the certified historic structure's rehabilitation will be consistent  
15 with the standards set forth in this chapter; and (iii) the owner has expended ten percent (10%) of  
16 its qualified rehabilitation expenditures, estimated in the contract entered into with the division of  
17 taxation for the project or its first phase of a phased project.

18 (4) "Commission" means the Rhode Island historical preservation and heritage  
19 commission created pursuant to section 42-45-2.

20 (5) "Exempt from real property tax" means, with respect to any certified historic  
21 structure, that the structure is exempt from taxation pursuant to section 44-3-3.

22 (6) "Holding period" means twenty-four (24) months after the commission issues a  
23 certificate of completed work to the owner. In the case of a rehabilitation which may reasonably  
24 be expected to be completed in phases as described in subdivision (15) of this section, "holding  
25 period" shall be extended to include a period of time beginning on the date of issuance of a  
26 certificate of completed work for the first phase or phases for which a certificate of completed  
27 work is issued and continuing until the expiration of twenty-four (24) months after the certificate  
28 of completed work issued for the last phase.

29 (7) "Part 2 application" means the Historic Preservation Certification Application Part 2-  
30 Description of Rehabilitation promulgated by the United States Department of Interior.

31 (8) "Placed in service" means that substantial rehabilitation work has been completed  
32 which would allow for occupancy of the entire structure or some identifiable portion of the  
33 structure.

34 (9) "Principal residence" means the principal residence of the owner within the meaning

1 of section 121 of the Internal Revenue Code [26 U.S.C. 121] or any successor provision.

2 (10) "Qualified rehabilitation expenditures" means any amounts expended in the  
3 rehabilitation of a certified historic structure properly capitalized to the building and either:

4 (i) Depreciable under the Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. section 1 et seq., or

5 (ii) Made with respect to property (other than the principal residence of the owner) held  
6 for sale by the owner. Fees paid pursuant to this chapter are not qualified rehabilitation  
7 expenditures. Notwithstanding the foregoing, except in the case of a nonprofit corporation, there  
8 will be deducted from qualified rehabilitation expenditures for the purposes of calculating the tax  
9 credit any funds made available to the person (including any entity specified in section 44-33.5-  
10 3(a)) incurring the qualified rehabilitation expenditures in the form of a direct grant from a  
11 federal, state or local governmental entity or agency or instrumentality of government.

12 (11) "Registered historic district" means any district listed in the national register of  
13 historic places, or the state register of historic places.

14 (12) "Remain idle" means that substantial work has ceased at the subject project; work  
15 crews have been reduced by more than twenty-five percent (25%) for reasons unrelated to  
16 scheduled completion of work in accordance with the project schedule, reasonably unanticipated  
17 physical conditions, or force majeure; or the project schedule that was originally submitted by the  
18 taxpayer to the commission has been extended by more than twelve (12) months for reasons other  
19 than reasonably unanticipated physical conditions or an event of force majeure (by way of  
20 example, and not in limitation, any delays, work stoppage, or work force reduction caused by  
21 issues with project funding, finances, disputes, or violation of laws shall be deemed to cause a  
22 project to remain idle).

23 (13) "Scattered Site Development" means a development project for which the developer  
24 seeks unified financing to rehabilitate dwelling units in two (2) or more buildings located in an  
25 area that is defined by a neighborhood revitalization plan and is not more than one mile in  
26 diameter.

27 (14) "Social club" means a corporation or other entity and/or its affiliate that offers its  
28 facilities primarily to members for social or recreational purposes and the majority source of its  
29 revenue is from funds and/or dues paid by its members and/or an entity defined as a social club  
30 pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(7).

31 (15) "Substantial rehabilitation" means, with respect to a certified historic structure, that  
32 the qualified rehabilitation expenses of the building during the twenty-four (24) month period  
33 selected by the taxpayer ending with or within the taxable year exceed the adjusted basis in such  
34 building and its structural components as of the beginning of such period. In the case of any

1 rehabilitation, which may reasonably be expected to be completed in phases set forth in  
2 architectural plans and specifications completed before the rehabilitation begins, the above  
3 definition shall be applied by substituting "sixty (60) month period" for "twenty-four (24) month  
4 period".

5 (16) "Trade or business" means an activity that is carried on for the production of income  
6 from the sale or manufacture of goods or performance of services, excluding residential rental  
7 activity.

8 **44-33.6-3. Tax credit. --** (a) Subject to the maximum credit provisions set forth in  
9 subsections (c) and (d) below, any person, firm, partnership, trust, estate, limited liability  
10 company, corporation (whether for profit or nonprofit) or other business entity that incurs  
11 qualified rehabilitation expenditures for the substantial rehabilitation of a certified historic  
12 structure, provided the rehabilitation meets standards consistent with the standards of the  
13 Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior for rehabilitation as certified by the  
14 commission and said person, firm, partnership, trust, estate, limited liability company,  
15 corporation or other business entity is not a social club as defined in subdivision 44-33.6-2 (13) of  
16 this chapter, shall be entitled to a credit against the taxes imposed on such person or entity  
17 pursuant to chapter 11, 12, 13, 14, 17 or 30 of this title in an amount equal to the following:

18 (1) Twenty percent (20%) of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures; or

19 (2) Twenty-five percent (25%) of the qualified rehabilitation expenditures provided that  
20 either:

21 (i) At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total rentable area of the certified historic  
22 structure will be made available for a trade or business; or

23 (ii) The entire rentable area located on the first floor of the certified historic structure will  
24 be made available for a trade or business.

25 (b) Tax credits allowed pursuant to this chapter shall be allowed for the taxable year in  
26 which such certified historic structure or an identifiable portion of the structure is placed in  
27 service provided that the substantial rehabilitation test is met for such year.

28 (c) Maximum project credit. - The credit allowed pursuant to this chapter shall not exceed  
29 five million dollars (\$5,000,000) for any certified rehabilitation project under this chapter.

30 (d) Maximum aggregate credits. - The aggregate credits authorized to be reserved  
31 pursuant to this chapter shall not exceed thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000) annually.

32 (e) Subject to the exception provided in subsection (g) of this section, if the amount of the  
33 tax credit exceeds the taxpayer's total tax liability for the year in which the substantially  
34 rehabilitated property is placed in service, the amount that exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability may

1 be carried forward for credit against the taxes imposed for the succeeding ten (10) years, or until  
2 the full credit is used, whichever occurs first for the tax credits. Credits allowed to a partnership, a  
3 limited liability company taxed as a partnership or multiple owners of property shall be passed  
4 through to the persons designated as partners, members or owners respectively pro rata or  
5 pursuant to an executed agreement among such persons designated as partners, members or  
6 owners documenting an alternate distribution method without regard to their sharing of other tax  
7 or economic attributes of such entity. Credits may be allocated to partners, members or owners  
8 that are exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3), section (c)(4) or section 501(c)(6) of the  
9 U.S. Code and these partners, members or owners must be treated as taxpayers for purposes of  
10 this section.

11 (f) If the taxpayer has not claimed the tax credits in whole or part, taxpayers eligible for  
12 the tax credits may assign, transfer or convey the credits, in whole or in part, by sale or otherwise  
13 to any individual or entity, including, but not limited to, condominium owners in the event the  
14 certified historic structure is converted into condominiums and assignees of the credits that have  
15 not claimed the tax credits in whole or part may assign, transfer or convey the credits, in whole or  
16 in part, by sale or otherwise to any individual or entity. The assignee of the tax credits may use  
17 acquired credits to offset up to one hundred percent (100%) of the tax liabilities otherwise  
18 imposed pursuant to chapter 11, 12, 13, (other than the tax imposed under section 44-13-13), 14,  
19 17 or 30 of this title. The assignee may apply the tax credit against taxes imposed on the assignee  
20 until the end of the tenth calendar year after the year in which the substantially rehabilitated  
21 property is placed in service or until the full credit assigned is used, whichever occurs first. Fiscal  
22 year assignees may claim the credit until the expiration of the fiscal year that ends within the  
23 tenth year after the year in which the substantially rehabilitated property is placed in service. The  
24 assignor shall perfect the transfer by notifying the state of Rhode Island division of taxation, in  
25 writing, within thirty (30) calendar days following the effective date of the transfer and shall  
26 provide any information as may be required by the division of taxation to administer and carry  
27 out the provisions of this section.

28 For purposes of this chapter, any assignment or sales proceeds received by the taxpayer  
29 for its assignment or sale of the tax credits allowed pursuant to this section shall be exempt from  
30 this title. If a tax credit is subsequently recaptured under this chapter, revoked or adjusted, the  
31 seller's tax calculation for the year of revocation, recapture, or adjustment shall be increased by  
32 the total amount of the sales proceeds, without proration, as a modification under chapter 30 of  
33 this title. In the event that the seller is not a natural person, the seller's tax calculation under  
34 chapters 11, 12, 13 (other than with respect to the tax imposed under section 44-13-13), 14, 17, or

1 30 of this title, as applicable, for the year of revocation, recapture, or adjustment, shall be  
2 increased by including the total amount of the sales proceeds without proration.

3 (g) Credits allowed to partners, members or owners that are exempt from taxation under  
4 section 501(c)(3), section (c)(4) or section 501(c)(6) of the U.S. Code, and only said credits, shall  
5 be fully refundable.

6 (h) Substantial rehabilitation of property that either:

7 (1) Is exempt from real property tax;

8 (2) Is a social club; or

9 (3) Consists of a single family home or a property that contains less than three (3)  
10 residential apartments or condominiums shall be ineligible for the tax credits authorized under  
11 this chapter; provided, however, a scattered site development with five (5) or more residential  
12 units in the aggregate (which may include single family homes) shall be eligible for tax credit. In  
13 the event a certified historic structure undergoes a substantial rehabilitation pursuant to this  
14 chapter and within twenty-four (24) months after issuance of a certificate of completed work the  
15 property becomes exempt from real property tax, the taxpayer's tax for the year shall be increased  
16 by the total amount of credit actually used against the tax.

17 (i) In the case of a corporation, this credit is only allowed against the tax of a corporation  
18 included in a consolidated return that qualifies for the credit and not against the tax of other  
19 corporations that may join in the filing of a consolidated tax return.

20 **44-33.6-4. Administration.** -- (a) To claim the tax credit authorized in this chapter,  
21 taxpayers shall apply:

22 (1) To the commission prior to the certified historic structure being placed in service for a  
23 certification that the certified historic structure's rehabilitation will be consistent with the  
24 standards of the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior for rehabilitation;

25 (2) To the commission after completion of the rehabilitation work of the certified historic  
26 structure for a certification that the rehabilitation is consistent with the standards of the Secretary  
27 of the United States Department of the Interior for rehabilitation; and

28 (3) To the division of taxation after completion of the rehabilitation work of the certified  
29 historic structure for a certification as to the amount of tax credit for which the rehabilitation  
30 qualifies. The commission and the division of taxation shall rely on the facts represented in the  
31 application without independent investigation and, with respect to the amount of tax credit for  
32 which the rehabilitation qualifies, upon the certification of a certified public accountant licensed  
33 in the state of Rhode Island. The applications shall be developed by the commission and the  
34 division of taxation and may be amended from time to time.

1           (b) Within thirty (30) days after the commission's and division of taxation's receipt of the  
2 taxpayer's application requesting certification for the completed rehabilitation work:

3           (1) The commission shall issue the taxpayer a written determination either denying or  
4 certifying the rehabilitation; and

5           (2) Division of taxation shall issue a certification of the amount of credit for which the  
6 rehabilitation qualifies. To claim the tax credit, the division of taxation's certification as to the  
7 amount of the tax credit shall be attached to all state tax returns on which the credit is claimed.

8           (c) No taxpayer may benefit from the provisions of this chapter unless the owner of the  
9 certified historic structure grants a restrictive covenant to the commission, agreeing that during  
10 the holding period no material alterations to the certified historic structure will be made without  
11 the commission's prior approval and agreeing that such shall be done in a manner consistent with  
12 the standards of the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior; and, in the event  
13 the owner applies for the twenty-five percent (25%) tax credit, that either:

14           (1) At least twenty-five percent (25%) of the total rentable area of the certified historic  
15 structure will be made available for a trade or business; or

16           (2) The entire rentable area located on the first floor of the certified historic structure will  
17 be made available for a trade or business, in either case, for a period of sixty (60) months after the  
18 placed in service date of the certified historic structure or identifiable portion thereof.

19           (d) The division of taxation shall charge a fee equal to three percent (3%) of qualified  
20 rehabilitation expenditures. The fee shall be payable in two (2) installments:

21           (1) Fifty (50%) percent of the total fee shall be paid upon submission of the Part 2  
22 application. This portion of the fee shall be non-refundable; and

23           (2) Fifty (50%) shall be paid upon issuance of the written determination by the  
24 commission certifying the rehabilitation and issuance by the division of taxation of the  
25 certification of the amount of credit for which the rehabilitation qualifies.

26           (e) Notwithstanding any provisions of the general laws or regulations adopted thereunder  
27 to the contrary, including, but not limited to, the provisions of chapter 2 of title 37, the division of  
28 taxation is hereby expressly authorized and empowered to enter into contracts with persons,  
29 firms, partnerships, trusts, estates, limited liability companies, corporations (whether for profit or  
30 nonprofit) or other business entities that incur qualified rehabilitation expenditures for the  
31 substantial rehabilitation of certified historic structures or some identifiable portion of a structure.  
32 Upon payment of the portion of the fee set forth in subdivision (d)(1) above, the division of  
33 taxation and the applicant shall enter into a contract for tax credits consistent with the terms and  
34 provisions of this chapter.

1           (f) Upon satisfaction of the requirements set forth herein and the payment of the fees as  
2 set forth in subdivision (d)(2) above, the division of taxation shall, on behalf of the State of  
3 Rhode Island, guarantee the delivery of one hundred percent (100%) of the tax credit and use of  
4 one hundred percent (100%) of the tax credit in the tax year a certified historic structure is placed  
5 in service through a contract with persons, firms, partnerships, trusts, estates, limited liability  
6 companies, corporations (whether for profit or nonprofit) or other business entities that will incur  
7 qualified rehabilitation expenditures for the substantial rehabilitation of a certified historic  
8 structure or some identifiable portion of a structure.

9           (g) Any contract executed pursuant to this chapter by a person, firm, partnership, trust,  
10 estate, limited liability company, corporation (whether for profit or nonprofit) or other business  
11 entity shall be assignable to:

12           (1) An affiliate thereof without any consent from the division of taxation;

13           (2) A banking institution as defined by subdivision 44-14-2(2) or credit union as defined  
14 in subdivision 44-15-1.1(1) without any consent from the division of taxation; or

15           (3) A person, firm, partnership, trust, estate, limited liability company, corporation  
16 (whether for profit or nonprofit) or other business entity that incurs qualified rehabilitation  
17 expenditures for the substantial rehabilitation of certified historic structures or some identifiable  
18 portion of a structure, with such assignment to be approved by the division of taxation, which  
19 approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or conditioned. For purposes of this subsection,  
20 "affiliate" shall be defined as any entity controlling, controlled by or under common control with  
21 such person, firm, partnership, trust, estate, limited liability company, corporation (whether for  
22 profit or nonprofit) or other business entity.

23           (h) If information comes to the attention of the commission or division of taxation at any  
24 time up to and including the last day of the holding period that is materially inconsistent with  
25 representations made in an application, the commission may deny the requested certification or  
26 revoke a certification previously given, and in either instance all fees paid by the applicant shall  
27 be deemed forfeited. In the event that tax credits or a portion of tax credits are subject to  
28 recapture for ineligible costs and such tax credits have been transferred, assigned and/or  
29 allocated, the state will pursue its recapture remedies and rights against the applicant of the tax  
30 credits, and all fees paid by the applicant shall be deemed forfeited. No redress shall be sought  
31 against assignees, transferees or allocates of such credits provided they acquired the tax credits by  
32 way of an arms-length transaction, for value, and without notice of violation, fraud or  
33 misrepresentation.

34           (i) The commission, in consultation with the division of taxation, shall promulgate such



1 rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of this chapter.

2 **44-33.6-5. Information Requests.** -- The tax division and its agents, for the purpose of  
3 ascertaining the correctness of any credit claimed under the provisions of this chapter, may  
4 examine any books, papers, records, or memoranda bearing upon the matters required to be  
5 included in the return, report, or other statement, and may require the attendance of the person  
6 executing the return, report, or other statement, or of any officer or employee of any taxpayer, or  
7 the attendance of any other person, and may examine the person under oath respecting any matter  
8 which the tax administrator or his or her agent deems pertinent or material in determining the  
9 eligibility for credits claimed and may request information from the commission, and the  
10 commission shall provide the information in all cases, to the extent not otherwise prohibited by  
11 statute.

12 **44-33.6-6. Election; Limitations.** -- Taxpayers who elect and qualify to claim tax credits  
13 for the substantial rehabilitation of a certified historic structure pursuant to this chapter are  
14 ineligible for any tax credits that may also be available to the taxpayer for the substantial  
15 rehabilitation of that particular certified historic structure under the provisions of chapters 33.1 of  
16 this title, 64.7 of title 42, and/or 31 of this title. Neither taxpayers nor assignees may apply any  
17 tax credits issued in accordance with this section until fiscal year 2014.

18 **44-33.6-7. Timing and Reapplication.** -- Taxpayers shall have twelve (12) months from  
19 the approval of Part 2 application to commence substantial construction activities related to the  
20 subject substantial rehabilitation. Upon commencing substantial construction activities, the  
21 taxpayer shall submit an affidavit of commencement of substantial construction to the  
22 commission, together with evidence of such requirements having been satisfied. Furthermore,  
23 after commencement of substantial construction activities, no project shall remain idle prior to  
24 completion for a period of time exceeding six (6) months. In the event that a taxpayer does not  
25 commence substantial construction activities within twelve (12) months from the approval of Part  
26 2 application, or in the event that a project remains idle prior to completion for a period of time  
27 exceeding six (6) months, the subject taxpayer shall forfeit all fees paid prior to such date and its  
28 then-current contract for tax credits shall be deemed null and void, and shall terminate without  
29 need for further action or documentation. Upon any such forfeiture and termination, a taxpayer  
30 may re-apply for tax credits pursuant to this chapter, however, notwithstanding anything  
31 contained herein to the contrary, one hundred percent (100%) of the fees required shall be paid  
32 upon reapplication and such fees shall be non-refundable. Additionally, any taxpayer reapplying  
33 for tax credits pursuant to this section 44-33.6-7 shall be required to submit evidence with its  
34 application establishing the reason for delay in commencement or the project sitting idle, as the

1 case may be, and provide evidence, reasonably satisfactory to the commission, that such  
2 condition or event causing same has been resolved. All taxpayers shall submit a reasonably  
3 detailed project timeline to the commission together with the Part 2 application. The provisions of  
4 this section shall be further detailed and incorporated into the form of contract for tax credits used  
5 in connection with this chapter.

6 **44-33.6-8. Sunset. --** No credits shall be authorized to be reserved pursuant to this  
7 chapter on or after June 30, 2023, and the provisions of this chapter shall be repealed effective  
8 June 30, 2023.

9 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage and shall be repealed effective June  
10 30, 2023.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO TAXATION - HISTORIC STRUCTURES

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- 1           This act would create economic incentives for the redevelopment and reuse of Rhode
- 2   Island's historic structures.
- 3           This act would take effect upon passage, and would be repealed effective June 30, 2023.

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