



**TECHNET**  
THE VOICE OF THE  
INNOVATION ECONOMY

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June 10, 2024

The Honorable Marvin Abney, Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island General Assembly

***Re: HB 8348 – State Purchases***

Dear Chair Abney:

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet's diverse membership includes dynamic American businesses ranging from startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents over 4.2 million employees and countless customers in the fields of information technology, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, the sharing and gig economies, advanced energy, transportation, cybersecurity, venture capital, and finance.

I write to express TechNet's support for HB 8348, which amends provisions enacted last year regarding state purchasing and contact between state agencies and prospective bidders.

HB 8348 will ensure that Rhode Island taxpayers are protected from potential self-dealing and other conflicts of interest in state procurement while addressing some unintended consequences that have arisen from last year's legislation. The bill will clarify that prospective bidders will not be barred from responding to an agency's request for proposal (RFP) simply for answering a request for information (RFI) or meeting with the agency to demonstrate their products or capabilities.

Developing a stronger understanding of the problems and the range of potential solutions, both through RFIs and more informal meetings can help agencies refine RFPs and craft more thoughtful and targeted contracts. Last year's legislation had a chilling effect on this activity as both agencies and companies were hesitant to have any discussions lest they be disqualified from bidding. This legislation will clarify the intent, protect taxpayers from conflicts of interest, and restore the productive dialog between state agencies and contractors.

Thank you for your consideration. We ask that the committee advance this legislation favorably.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Gilrein".

Christopher Gilrein  
Executive Director, Northeast  
TechNet  
[cgilrein@technet.org](mailto:cgilrein@technet.org)