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**DOR commends Division of Taxation’s Special Investigation Unit
and Rhode Island State Police in tobacco tax case**

Joint effort leads to arrest, seizure of untaxed tobacco products, following investigation

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Rhode Island Acting Director of Revenue David M. Sullivan today praised the work of the Rhode Island Division of Taxation’s Special Investigation Unit, the Rhode Island State Police, and the Massachusetts State Police, which recently led to an arrest and seizure in a tobacco tax case.

“This is a good example of teamwork -- of government agencies working together and going the extra mile to make sure that the law is upheld and that everybody plays by the rules,” Sullivan said. “Their concerted effort and determined investigative work led to the demise of an alleged criminal enterprise that the police say was illegally siphoning taxpayer dollars,” he said. “This sends a message to dishonest dealers that they will be caught. It also sends a message to honest distributors and retailers that we are working hard to maintain a level playing field for them.”

The seizure and arrest resulted from an investigation into the illegal distribution of untaxed rolling papers, chewing tobacco, roll-your-own tobacco, and other items. Under Rhode Island law, such items cannot be sold in the state unless the required taxes have been paid, said Sullivan, who is also Rhode Island’s state tax administrator. Altogether, approximately \$1.5 million in untaxed tobacco products were seized. Such untaxed products cost the State of Rhode Island between \$800,000 and \$900,000 in revenue.

“It was the Division of Taxation’s Special Investigation Unit staff who got the ball rolling in this case. The Special Investigation Unit earlier this year advised the Rhode Island State Police Intelligence Unit of a possible operation involving the distribution of untaxed tobacco products. I am extremely proud of the SIU -- and of their professionalism and dedication,” Sullivan said.

“I would also like to thank Colonel Steven G. O’Donnell, superintendent of the Rhode Island State Police, and Lieutenant Colonel Todd E. Catlow, deputy superintendent and chief of field operations for the Rhode Island State Police, as well as the entire State Police team, for their extra effort and solid police work in this case,” Sullivan said. Sullivan also thanked the Massachusetts State Police for its efforts, and the Rhode Island Department of Corrections for its assistance in executing warrants. For more information on the case, click [here](#).

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