The Sugar Act notes:

The First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer Lord Grenville was trying to bring the colonies in line with regard to payment of taxes. He had beefed up the Navy presence and instructed them to become more active in customs enforcement. Parliament decided it would be wise to make a few adjustments to the trade regulations. The Sugar Act reduced the rate of tax on molasses from six pence to three pence per gallon, while Grenville took measures that the duty be strictly enforced. The act also listed more foreign goods to be taxed including sugar, certain wines, coffee, pimiento, cambric and printed calico, and further, regulated the export of lumber and iron. The enforced tax on molasses caused the almost immediate decline in the rum industry in the colonies. The combined effect of the new duties was to sharply reduce the trade with Madeira, the Azores, the Canary Islands, and the French West Indies (Guadelupe, Martinique and Santo Domingo (now Haiti)), all important destination ports for lumber, flour, cheese, and assorted farm products. The situation disrupted the colonial economy by reducing the markets to which the colonies could sell, and the amount of currency available to them for the purchase of British manufactured goods. This act, and the Currency Act, set the stage for the revolt at the imposition of the Stamp Act.

A major protester and organizer against the Sugar Act was Sam Adams. In May 1764, Samuel Adams drafted a report on the Sugar Act for the Massachusetts assembly, in which he denounced the act as an infringement of the rights of the colonists as British subjects:

*For if our Trade may be taxed why not our Lands? Why not the Produce of our Lands & every thing we possess or make use of? This we apprehend annihilates our Charter Right to govern & tax ourselves – It strikes our British Privileges, which as we have never forfeited them, we hold in common with our Fellow Subjects who are Natives of Britain: If Taxes are laid upon us in any shape without our having a legal Representation where they are laid, are we not reduced from the Character of free Subjects to the miserable State of tributary Slaves*. (Draper.Theodore. *A Struggle For Power:The American Revolution.* 1996)