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HOUSE BILL NO. 2548

Offered January 10, 2007

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A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 58.1-605, 58.1-606, 58.1-611.1, and 58.1-614 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the authority for Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Falls Church to impose an additional local sales and use tax to support the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Patrons—Ebbin and Plum

Referred to Committee on Finance

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 58.1-605, 58.1-606, 58.1-611.1, and 58.1-614 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 58.1-605. To what extent and under what conditions cities and counties may levy local sales taxes; collection thereof by Commonwealth and return of revenue to each city or county entitled thereto.

A. No county, city or town shall impose any local general sales or use tax or any local general retail sales or use tax except as authorized by this section.

B. The council of any city and the governing body of any county may levy a general retail sales tax at the rate of one percent to provide revenue for the general fund of such city or county. Such tax shall be added to the rate of the state sales tax imposed by §§ 58.1-603 and 58.1-604 and shall be subject to all the provisions of this chapter and the rules and regulations published with respect thereto. No discount under § 58.1-622 shall be allowed on a local sales tax.

C. The council of any city and the governing body of any county desiring to impose a local sales tax under this section may do so by the adoption of an ordinance stating its purpose and referring to this section, and providing that such ordinance shall be effective on the first day of a month at least 60 days after its adoption. A certified copy of such ordinance shall be forwarded to the Tax Commissioner so that it will be received within five days after its adoption.

D. Any local sales tax levied under this section shall be administered and collected by the Tax Commissioner in the same manner and subject to the same penalties as provided for the state sales tax.

E. All local sales tax moneys collected by the Tax Commissioner under this section shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of a special fund which is hereby created on the Comptroller's books under the name "Collections of Local Sales Taxes." Such local sales tax moneys shall be credited to the account of each particular city or county levying a local sales tax under this section. The basis of such credit shall be the city or county in which the sales were made as shown by the records of the Department and certified by it monthly to the Comptroller, namely, the city or county of location of each place of business of every dealer paying the tax to the Commonwealth without regard to the city or county of possible use by the purchasers. If a dealer has any place of business located in more than one political subdivision by reason of the boundary line or lines passing through such place of business, the amount of sales tax paid by such a dealer with respect to such place of business shall be treated for the purposes of this section as follows: one-half shall be assignable to each political subdivision where two are involved, one-third where three are involved, and one-fourth where four are involved.

F. As soon as practicable after the local sales tax moneys have been paid into the state treasury in any month for the preceding month, the Comptroller shall draw his warrant on the Treasurer of Virginia in the proper amount in favor of each city or county entitled to the monthly return of its local sales tax moneys, and such payments shall be charged to the account of each such city or county under the special fund created by this section. If errors are made in any such payment, or adjustments are otherwise necessary, whether attributable to refunds to taxpayers, or to some other fact, the errors shall be corrected and adjustments made in the payments for the next six months as follows: one-sixth of the total adjustment shall be included in the payments for the next six months. In addition, the payment shall include a refund of amounts erroneously not paid to the city or county and not previously refunded during the three years preceding the discovery of the error. A correction and adjustment in payments described in this subsection due to the misallocation of funds by the dealer shall be made within three years of the date of the payment error.

G. Such payments to counties are subject to the qualification that in any county wherein is situated any incorporated town constituting a special school district and operated as a separate school district under a town school board of three members appointed by the town council, the county treasurer shall pay into the town treasury for general governmental purposes the proper proportionate amount received

by him in the ratio that the school age population of such town bears to the school age population of the entire county. If the school age population of any town constituting a separate school district is increased by the annexation of territory since the last preceding school age population census, such increase shall, for the purposes of this section, be added to the school age population of such town as shown by the last such census and a proper reduction made in the school age population of the county or counties from which the annexed territory was acquired.

H. One-half of such payments to counties are subject to the further qualification, other than as set out in subsection G above, that in any county wherein is situated any incorporated town not constituting a separate special school district which has complied with its charter provisions providing for the election of its council and mayor for a period of at least four years immediately prior to the adoption of the sales tax ordinance, the county treasurer shall pay into the town treasury of each such town for general governmental purposes the proper proportionate amount received by him in the ratio that the school age population of each such town bears to the school age population of the entire county, based on the latest statewide school census. The preceding requirement pertaining to the time interval between compliance with election provisions and adoption of the sales tax ordinance shall not apply to a tier-city. If the school age population of any such town not constituting a separate special school district is increased by the annexation of territory or otherwise since the last preceding school age population census, such increase shall, for the purposes of this section, be added to the school age population of such town as shown by the last such census and a proper reduction made in the school age population of the county or counties from which the annexed territory was acquired.

I. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection H, the board of supervisors of a county may, in its discretion, appropriate funds to any incorporated town not constituting a separate school district within such county which has not complied with the provisions of its charter relating to the elections of its council and mayor, an amount not to exceed the amount it would have received from the tax imposed by this chapter if such election had been held.

J. It is further provided that if any incorporated town which would otherwise be eligible to receive funds from the county treasurer under subsection G or H of this section be located in a county which does not levy a general retail sales tax under the provisions of this law, such town may levy a general retail sales tax at the rate of one percent to provide revenue for the general fund of the town, subject to all the provisions of this section generally applicable to cities and counties. Any tax levied under the authority of this subsection shall in no case continue to be levied on or after the effective date of a county ordinance imposing a general retail sales tax in the county within which such town is located.

K. 1. In addition to the 1% general retail sales tax authorized by this section, Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Falls Church may levy an additional 0.25% general retail sales tax. The governing body of any city or county desiring to impose the additional local sales tax authorized under this subsection may do so by the adoption of an ordinance, after a public hearing for which notice has been given in conformity with subsection B of § 58.1-3321, stating its purpose and referring to this subsection, and providing that such ordinance shall be effective on the first day of a month at least 90 days after its adoption, provided that such additional local sales tax may not be levied prior to January 1, 2008. A certified copy of such ordinance shall be forwarded to the Tax Commissioner so that it will be received within five days after its adoption.

2. All tax moneys collected by the Tax Commissioner and attributable to the additional local sales tax authorized under this subsection shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of a special fund that is hereby created on the Comptroller's books under the name "Collections of Local Sales Taxes for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority." Such moneys shall be credited to the account of each particular city or county levying such additional local sales tax. The basis of such credit shall be the city or county in which the sales were made as shown by the records of the Department and certified by it monthly to the Comptroller, namely, the city or county of location of each place of business of every dealer paying the tax to the Commonwealth without regard to the city or county of possible use by the purchasers.

3. All moneys distributed to a county or city from the "Collections of Local Sales Taxes for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority" special fund shall be used solely for the city's or county's obligations to the operating deficit, capital, and debt service of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Such moneys shall not be available for use under § 15.2-5814 or 15.2-5914.

4. The provisions of subsections A, B, C, D, E, and F shall be applicable to the tax authorized under this subsection for purposes of the administration of, and distribution of moneys collected under, such tax.

§ 58.1-606. To what extent and under what conditions cities and counties may levy local use tax; collection thereof by Commonwealth and return of revenues to the cities and counties.

A. The council of any city and the governing body of any county which has levied or may hereafter levy a city or county sales tax under § 58.1-605 may levy a city or county use tax at the rate of one percent to provide revenue for the general fund of such city or county. Such tax shall be added to the

rate of the state use tax imposed by this chapter and shall be subject to all the provisions of this chapter, and all amendments thereof, and the rules and regulations published with respect thereto, except that no discount under § 58.1-622 shall be allowed on a local use tax.

B. The council of any city and the governing body of any county desiring to impose a local use tax under this section may do so in the manner following:

1. If the city or county has previously imposed the local sales tax authorized by § 58.1-605, the local use tax may be imposed by the council or governing body by the adoption of a resolution by a majority of all the members thereof, by a recorded yea and nay vote, stating its purpose and referring to this section, and providing that the local use tax shall become effective on the first day of a month at least 60 days after the adoption of the resolution. A certified copy of such resolution shall be forwarded to the Tax Commissioner so that it will be received within five days after its adoption. The resolution authorized by this paragraph may be adopted in the manner stated notwithstanding any other provision of law, including any charter provision.

2. If the city or county has not imposed the local sales tax authorized by § 58.1-605, the local use tax may be imposed by ordinance together with the local sales tax in the manner set out in subsections B and C of § 58.1-605.

C. Any local use tax levied under this section shall be administered and collected by the Tax Commissioner in the same manner and subject to the same penalties as provided for the state use tax.

D. The local use tax authorized by this section shall not apply to transactions to which the sales tax applies, the situs of which for state and local sales tax purposes is the city or county of location of each place of business of every dealer paying the tax to the Commonwealth without regard to the city or county of possible use by the purchasers. However, the local use tax authorized by this section shall apply to tangible personal property purchased without this Commonwealth for use or consumption within the city or county imposing the local use tax, or stored within the city or county for use or consumption, where the property would have been subject to the sales tax if it had been purchased within this Commonwealth. The local use tax shall also apply to leases or rentals of tangible personal property where the place of business of the lessor is without this Commonwealth and such leases or rentals are subject to the state tax. Moreover, the local use tax shall apply in all cases in which the state use tax applies.

E. Out-of-state dealers who hold certificates of registration to collect the use tax from their customers for remittance to this Commonwealth shall, to the extent reasonably practicable, in filing their monthly use tax returns with the Tax Commissioner, break down their shipments into this Commonwealth by cities and counties so as to show the city or county of destination. If, however, the out-of-state dealer is unable accurately to assign any shipment to a particular city or county, the local use tax on the tangible personal property involved shall be remitted to the Commonwealth by such dealer without attempting to assign the shipment to any city or county.

F. Local use tax revenue shall be distributed among the cities and counties for which it is collected, respectively, as shown by the records of the Department, and the procedure shall be the same as that prescribed for distribution of local sales tax revenue under § 58.1-605. The local use tax revenue that is not accurately assignable to a particular city or county shall be distributed monthly by the appropriate state authorities among the cities and counties in this Commonwealth imposing the local use tax upon the basis of taxable retail sales in the respective cities and counties in which the local sales and use tax was in effect in the taxable month involved, as shown by the records of the Department, and computed with respect to taxable retail sales as reflected by the amounts of the local sales tax revenue distributed among such cities and counties, respectively, in the month of distribution *and from the "Collections of Local Sales Taxes for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority" special fund established under subsection K of § 58.1-605*. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the Tax Commissioner shall develop a uniform method to distribute local use tax. Any significant changes to the method of local use tax distribution shall be phased in over a five-year period. Distribution information shall be shared with the affected localities prior to implementation of the changes.

G. All local use tax revenue shall be used, applied or disbursed by the cities and counties as provided in § 58.1-605 with respect to local sales tax revenue.

H. 1. In addition to the 1% use tax authorized by this section, Arlington County, Fairfax County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Fairfax, and the City of Falls Church may levy an additional 0.25% local use tax as provided in this subsection.

2. If the city or county imposes the additional local sales tax authorized by subsection K of § 58.1-605, the additional local use tax authorized under this subsection must be imposed by the governing body of the city or county. Such tax must be imposed by the same ordinance imposing the tax pursuant to subdivision K 1 of § 58.1-605.

3. All tax moneys collected by the Tax Commissioner and attributable to the additional local use tax authorized under this subsection shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the "Collections of

Local Sales Taxes for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority" special fund established under subdivision K of § 58.1-605. Such moneys shall be credited to the cities or counties levying the additional local use tax in the same manner that the 1% use tax is credited to the cities or counties levying that tax.

4. All moneys distributed to a county or city from the "Collections of Local Sales Taxes for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority" special fund shall be used in the manner and for the purposes described in subdivision K 3 of § 58.1-605.

5. The provisions of subsections A, C, D, E, and F shall be applicable to the tax authorized under this subsection for purposes of the administration of, and distribution of moneys collected under, such tax.

§ 58.1-611.1. Rate of tax on sales of food purchased for human consumption.

A. The tax imposed by §§ 58.1-603 and 58.1-604 on food purchased for human consumption shall be levied and distributed as follows:

1. From January 1, 2000, through midnight on June 30, 2005, the tax rate on such food shall be three percent of the gross sales price. The revenue from the tax shall be distributed as follows: (i) the revenue from the tax at the rate of one-half percent shall be distributed as provided in subsection A of § 58.1-638, (ii) the revenue from the tax at the rate of one percent shall be distributed as provided in subsections B, C and D of § 58.1-638, and (iii) the revenue from the tax at the rate of one and one-half percent shall be used for general fund purposes.

2. On and after July 1, 2005, the tax rate on such food shall be one and one-half percent of the gross sales price. The revenue from the tax shall be distributed as follows: (i) the revenue from the tax at the rate of one-half percent shall be distributed as provided in subsection A of § 58.1-638 and (ii) the revenue from the tax at the rate of one percent shall be distributed as provided in subsections B, C and D of § 58.1-638.

B. The provisions of this section shall not affect the imposition of tax on food purchased for human consumption pursuant to §§ 58.1-605 and 58.1-606.

C. As used in this section, "food purchased for human consumption" has the same meaning as "food" defined in the Food Stamp Act of 1977, 7 U.S.C. § 2012, as amended, and federal regulations adopted pursuant to that Act, except it shall not include seeds and plants which produce food for human consumption. For the purpose of this section, "food purchased for human consumption" shall not include food sold by any retail establishment where the gross receipts derived from the sale of food prepared by such retail establishment for immediate consumption on or off the premises of the retail establishment constitutes more than 80 percent of the total gross receipts of that retail establishment, including but not limited to motor fuel purchases, regardless of whether such prepared food is consumed on the premises of that retail establishment. For purposes of this section, "retail establishment" means each place of business for which any "dealer," as defined in § 58.1-612, is required to apply for and receive a certificate of registration pursuant to § 58.1-613.

D. The tax imposed pursuant to subsection K of § 58.1-605 and pursuant to subsection H of § 58.1-606 shall not apply to food purchased for human consumption.

§ 58.1-614. Vending machine sales.

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of §§ 58.1-603 and 58.1-604, whenever a dealer makes sales of tangible personal property through vending machines, or in any other manner making collection of the tax impractical, as determined by the Tax Commissioner, such dealer shall be required to report his wholesale purchases for sale at retail from vending machines and shall be required to remit an amount based on ~~four and one-half percent~~ *4.5%* through midnight on July 31, 2004, and ~~five percent~~ *5%* beginning on and after August 1, 2004, of such wholesale purchases*; except that the dealer shall remit an amount based on 5.25% of his wholesale purchases in any city or county that imposes the additional sales tax authorized under subsection K of § 58.1-605*.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of §§ 58.1-605 and 58.1-606, dealers making sales of tangible personal property through vending machines shall report and remit the ~~one percent~~ *1%* local sales and use tax *and, if applicable, the 0.25% additional local sales and use tax provided under this chapter,* computed as provided in subsection A of this section.

C. The provisions of subsections A and B of this section shall not be applicable to vending machine operators all of whose machines are under contract to nonprofit organizations. Such operators shall report only the gross receipts from machines selling items for more than ~~10 cents~~ *$0.10* and shall be required to remit an amount based on a percentage of their remaining gross sales established by the Tax Commissioner to take into account the inclusion of sales tax.

D. Notwithstanding any other provisions in this section, when the Tax Commissioner determines that it is impractical to collect the tax in the manner provided by those sections, such dealer shall be required to remit an amount based on a percentage of gross receipts which takes into account the inclusion of the sales tax.

E. The provisions of this section shall not be applicable to any dealer who fails to maintain records

satisfactory to the Tax Commissioner. A dealer making sales of tangible personal property through vending machines shall obtain a certificate of registration under § 58.1-613 in relevant form for each county or city in which he has machines.

2. That the Department of Taxation shall promulgate all necessary and reasonable regulations to govern the administration of the taxes created by this act.

3. That the revenues generated by the provisions of this act shall not be used to calculate or reduce the share of local, federal, and state revenues otherwise available to participating jurisdictions, or to the Northern Virginia Transportation District. Further, such revenues and moneys shall not be included in any computation of, or formula for, a locality's ability to pay for public education, upon which appropriations of state revenues to local governments for public education are determined.

4. That the authority to impose the additional tax under this act shall only be effective in the event that matching federal funds are appropriated and distributed to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

5. That if any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this act or the application thereof to any person, entity, or circumstance is adjudged invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect the validity of the remainder hereof but shall be confined to the clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part hereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered, and to this end the provisions of this act are severable.