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HOUSE BILL NO. 15

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled November 16, 2015

A BILL to amend and reenact § 58.1-3506 of the Code of Virginia, relating to personal property tax; classifications.

Patrons—Ware, Cox, Helsel, Jones, Landes and Lingamfelter

Referred to Committee on Finance

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 58.1-3506 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 58.1-3506. Other classifications of tangible personal property for taxation.**

A. The items of property set forth below are each declared to be a separate class of property and shall constitute a classification for local taxation separate from other classifications of tangible personal property provided in this chapter:

1. a. Boats or watercraft weighing five tons or more, not used solely for business purposes;
b. Boats or watercraft weighing less than five tons, not used solely for business purposes;
2. Aircraft having a maximum passenger seating capacity of no more than 50 that are owned and operated by scheduled air carriers operating under certificates of public convenience and necessity issued by the State Corporation Commission or the Civil Aeronautics Board;

3. Aircraft having a registered empty gross weight equal to or greater than 20,000 pounds that are not owned or operated by scheduled air carriers recognized under federal law, but not including any aircraft described in subdivision 4;

4. Aircraft that are (i) considered Warbirds, manufactured and intended for military use, excluding those manufactured after 1954, and (ii) used only for (a) exhibit or display to the general public and otherwise used for educational purposes (including such flights as are necessary for testing, maintaining, or preparing such aircraft for safe operation), or (b) airshow and flight demonstrations (including such flights necessary for testing, maintaining, or preparing such aircraft for safe operation), shall constitute a new class of property. Such class of property shall not include any aircraft used for commercial purposes, including transportation and other services for a fee;

5. All other aircraft not included in subdivisions A 2, A 3, or A 4 and flight simulators;

6. Antique motor vehicles as defined in § 46.2-100 which may be used for general transportation purposes as provided in subsection C of § 46.2-730;

7. Tangible personal property used in a research and development business;

8. Heavy construction machinery not used for business purposes, including land movers, bulldozers, front-end loaders, graders, packers, power shovels, cranes, pile drivers, forest harvesting and silvicultural activity equipment and ditch and other types of diggers;

9. Generating equipment purchased after December 31, 1974, for the purpose of changing the energy source of a manufacturing plant from oil or natural gas to coal, wood, wood bark, wood residue, or any other alternative energy source for use in manufacturing and any cogeneration equipment purchased to achieve more efficient use of any energy source. Such generating equipment and cogeneration equipment shall include, without limitation, such equipment purchased by firms engaged in the business of generating electricity or steam, or both;

10. Vehicles without motive power, used or designed to be used as manufactured homes as defined in § 36-85.3;

11. Computer hardware used by businesses primarily engaged in providing data processing services to other nonrelated or nonaffiliated businesses;

12. Privately owned pleasure boats and watercraft, 18 feet and over, used for recreational purposes only;

13. Privately owned vans with a seating capacity of not less than seven nor more than 15 persons, including the driver, used exclusively pursuant to a ridesharing arrangement as defined in § 46.2-1400;

14. Motor vehicles specially equipped to provide transportation for physically handicapped individuals;

15. Motor vehicles (i) owned by members of a volunteer emergency medical services agency or a member of a volunteer fire department or (ii) leased by volunteer emergency medical services personnel or a member of a volunteer fire department if the volunteer is obligated by the terms of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor vehicle. One motor vehicle that is owned by each volunteer member who meets the definition of "emergency medical services personnel" in § 32.1-111.1 or

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59 volunteer fire department member, or leased by each volunteer member who meets the definition of
60 "emergency medical services personnel" in § 32.1-111.1 or volunteer fire department member if the
61 volunteer is obligated by the terms of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor
62 vehicle, may be specially classified under this section, provided the volunteer regularly responds to
63 emergency calls. The volunteer shall furnish the commissioner of revenue, or other assessing officer,
64 with a certification by the chief of the volunteer emergency medical services agency or volunteer fire
65 department, that the volunteer is an individual who meets the definition of "emergency medical services
66 personnel" in § 32.1-111.1 or a member of the volunteer fire department who regularly responds to calls
67 or regularly performs other duties for the emergency medical services agency or fire department, and the
68 motor vehicle owned or leased by the volunteer is identified. The certification shall be submitted by
69 January 31 of each year to the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer; however, the
70 commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer shall be authorized, in his discretion, and for good
71 cause shown and without fault on the part of the volunteer, to accept a certification after the January 31
72 deadline. In any county that prorates the assessment of tangible personal property pursuant to
73 § 58.1-3516, a replacement vehicle may be certified and classified pursuant to this subsection when the
74 vehicle certified as of the immediately prior January date is transferred during the tax year;

75 16. Motor vehicles (i) owned by auxiliary members of a volunteer emergency medical services
76 agency or volunteer fire department or (ii) leased by auxiliary members of a volunteer emergency
77 medical services agency or volunteer fire department if the auxiliary member is obligated by the terms
78 of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor vehicle. One motor vehicle that is
79 regularly used by each auxiliary volunteer fire department or emergency medical services agency
80 member may be specially classified under this section. The auxiliary member shall furnish the
81 commissioner of revenue, or other assessing officer, with a certification by the chief of the volunteer
82 emergency medical services agency or volunteer fire department, that the volunteer is an auxiliary
83 member of the volunteer emergency medical services agency or fire department who regularly performs
84 duties for the emergency medical services agency or fire department, and the motor vehicle is identified
85 as regularly used for such purpose; however, if a volunteer meets the definition of "emergency medical
86 services personnel" in § 32.1-111.1 or volunteer fire department member and an auxiliary member are
87 members of the same household, that household shall be allowed no more than two special
88 classifications under this subdivision or subdivision 15. The certification shall be submitted by January
89 31 of each year to the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer; however, the commissioner of
90 revenue or other assessing officer shall be authorized, in his discretion, and for good cause shown and
91 without fault on the part of the auxiliary member, to accept a certification after the January 31 deadline;

92 17. Motor vehicles owned by a nonprofit organization and used to deliver meals to homebound
93 persons or provide transportation to senior or handicapped citizens in the community to carry out the
94 purposes of the nonprofit organization;

95 18. Privately owned camping trailers as defined in § 46.2-100, and privately owned travel trailers as
96 defined in § 46.2-1500, which are used for recreational purposes only, and privately owned trailers as
97 defined in § 46.2-100, which are designed and used for the transportation of horses except those trailers
98 described in subdivision A 11 of § 58.1-3505;

99 19. One motor vehicle owned and regularly used by a veteran who has either lost, or lost the use of,
100 one or both legs, or an arm or a hand, or who is blind or who is permanently and totally disabled as
101 certified by the Department of Veterans Services. In order to qualify, the veteran shall provide a written
102 statement to the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer from the Department of Veterans
103 Services that the veteran has been so designated or classified by the Department of Veterans Services as
104 to meet the requirements of this section, and that his disability is service-connected. For purposes of this
105 section, a person is blind if he meets the provisions of § 46.2-100;

106 20. Motor vehicles (i) owned by persons who have been appointed to serve as auxiliary police
107 officers pursuant to Article 3 (§ 15.2-1731 et seq.) of Chapter 17 of Title 15.2 or (ii) leased by persons
108 who have been so appointed to serve as auxiliary police officers if the person is obligated by the terms
109 of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor vehicle. One motor vehicle that is
110 regularly used by each auxiliary police officer to respond to auxiliary police duties may be specially
111 classified under this section. In order to qualify for such classification, any auxiliary police officer who
112 applies for such classification shall identify the vehicle for which this classification is sought, and shall
113 furnish the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer with a certification from the governing
114 body that has appointed such auxiliary police officer or from the official who has appointed such
115 auxiliary officers. That certification shall state that the applicant is an auxiliary police officer who
116 regularly uses a motor vehicle to respond to auxiliary police duties, and it shall state that the vehicle for
117 which the classification is sought is the vehicle that is regularly used for that purpose. The certification
118 shall be submitted by January 31 of each year to the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer;
119 however, the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer shall be authorized, in his discretion,
120 and for good cause shown and without fault on the part of the member, to accept a certification after the

January 31 deadline;

21. Until the first to occur of June 30, 2019, or the date that a special improvements tax is no longer levied under § 15.2-4607 on property within a Multicounty Transportation Improvement District created pursuant to Chapter 46 (§ 15.2-4600 et seq.) of Title 15.2, tangible personal property that is used in manufacturing, testing, or operating satellites within a Multicounty Transportation Improvement District, provided that such business personal property is put into service within the District on or after July 1, 1999;

22. Motor vehicles which use clean special fuels as defined in § 46.2-749.3, which shall not include any vehicle described in subdivision 38 or 40;

23. Wild or exotic animals kept for public exhibition in an indoor or outdoor facility that is properly licensed by the federal government, the Commonwealth, or both, and that is properly zoned for such use. "Wild animals" means any animals that are found in the wild, or in a wild state, within the boundaries of the United States, its territories or possessions. "Exotic animals" means any animals that are found in the wild, or in a wild state, and are native to a foreign country;

24. Furniture, office, and maintenance equipment, exclusive of motor vehicles, that are owned and used by an organization whose real property is assessed in accordance with § 58.1-3284.1 and that is used by that organization for the purpose of maintaining or using the open or common space within a residential development;

25. Motor vehicles, trailers, and semitrailers with a gross vehicle weight of 10,000 pounds or more used to transport property for hire by a motor carrier engaged in interstate commerce;

26. All tangible personal property employed in a trade or business other than that described in subdivisions A 1 through A 19, except for subdivision A 17, of § 58.1-3503;

27. Programmable computer equipment and peripherals employed in a trade or business;

28. Privately owned pleasure boats and watercraft, motorized and under 18 feet, used for recreational purposes only;

29. Privately owned pleasure boats and watercraft, nonmotorized and under 18 feet, used for recreational purposes only;

30. Privately owned motor homes as defined in § 46.2-100 that are used for recreational purposes only;

31. Tangible personal property used in the provision of Internet services. For purposes of this subdivision, "Internet service" means a service, including an Internet Web-hosting service, that enables users to access content, information, electronic mail, and the Internet as part of a package of services sold to customers;

32. Motor vehicles (i) owned by persons who serve as auxiliary, reserve, volunteer, or special deputy sheriffs or (ii) leased by persons who serve as auxiliary, reserve, volunteer, or special deputy sheriffs if the person is obligated by the terms of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor vehicle. For purposes of this subdivision, the term "auxiliary deputy sheriff" means auxiliary, reserve, volunteer, or special deputy sheriff. One motor vehicle that is regularly used by each auxiliary deputy sheriff to respond to auxiliary deputy sheriff duties may be specially classified under this section. In order to qualify for such classification, any auxiliary deputy sheriff who applies for such classification shall identify the vehicle for which this classification is sought, and shall furnish the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer with a certification from the governing body that has appointed such auxiliary deputy sheriff or from the official who has appointed such auxiliary deputy sheriff. That certification shall state that the applicant is an auxiliary deputy sheriff who regularly uses a motor vehicle to respond to such auxiliary duties, and it shall state that the vehicle for which the classification is sought is the vehicle that is regularly used for that purpose. The certification shall be submitted by January 31 of each year to the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer; however, the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer shall be authorized, in his discretion, and for good cause shown and without fault on the part of the member, to accept a certification after the January 31 deadline;

33. Forest harvesting and silvicultural activity equipment;

34. Equipment used primarily for research, development, production, or provision of biotechnology for the purpose of developing or providing products or processes for specific commercial or public purposes, including medical, pharmaceutical, nutritional, and other health-related purposes; agricultural purposes; or environmental purposes but not for human cloning purposes as defined in § 32.1-162.21 or for products or purposes related to human embryo stem cells. For purposes of this section, biotechnology equipment means equipment directly used in activities associated with the science of living things;

35. Boats or watercraft weighing less than five tons, used for business purposes only;

36. Boats or watercraft weighing five tons or more, used for business purposes only;

37. Tangible personal property which is owned and operated by a service provider who is not a

CMRS provider and is not licensed by the FCC used to provide, for a fee, wireless broadband Internet service. For purposes of this subdivision, "wireless broadband Internet service" means a service that enables customers to access, through a wireless connection at an upload or download bit rate of more than one megabyte per second, Internet service, as defined in § 58.1-602, as part of a package of services sold to customers;

38. Low-speed vehicles as defined in § 46.2-100;

39. Motor vehicles with a seating capacity of not less than 30 persons, including the driver;

40. Motor vehicles powered solely by electricity;

41. Tangible personal property designed and used primarily for the purpose of manufacturing a product from renewable energy as defined in § 56-576;

42. Motor vehicles leased by a county, city, town, or constitutional officer if the locality or constitutional officer is obligated by the terms of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor vehicle;

43. Computer equipment and peripherals used in a data center. For purposes of this subdivision, "data center" means a facility whose primary services are the storage, management, and processing of digital data and is used to house (i) computer and network systems, including associated components such as servers, network equipment and appliances, telecommunications, and data storage systems; (ii) systems for monitoring and managing infrastructure performance; (iii) equipment used for the transformation, transmission, distribution, or management of at least one megawatt of capacity of electrical power and cooling, including substations, uninterruptible power supply systems, all electrical plant equipment, and associated air handlers; (iv) Internet-related equipment and services; (v) data communications connections; (vi) environmental controls; (vii) fire protection systems; and (viii) security systems and services;

44. Motor vehicles (i) owned by persons who serve as uniformed members of the Virginia Defense Force pursuant to Article 4.2 (§ 44-54.4 et seq.) of Chapter 1 of Title 44 or (ii) leased by persons who serve as uniformed members of the Virginia Defense Force pursuant to Article 4.2 (§ 44-54.4 et seq.) of Chapter 1 of Title 44 if the person is obligated by the terms of the lease to pay tangible personal property tax on the motor vehicle. One motor vehicle that is regularly used by a uniformed member of the Virginia Defense Force to respond to his official duties may be specially classified under this section. In order to qualify for such classification, any person who applies for such classification shall identify the vehicle for which the classification is sought and shall furnish to the commissioner of the revenue or other assessing officer a certification from the Adjutant General of the Department of Military Affairs under § 44-11. That certification shall state that (a) the applicant is a uniformed member of the Virginia Defense Force who regularly uses a motor vehicle to respond to his official duties, and (b) the vehicle for which the classification is sought is the vehicle that is regularly used for that purpose. The certification shall be submitted by January 31 of each year to the commissioner of the revenue or other assessing officer; however, the commissioner of revenue or other assessing officer shall be authorized, in his discretion, and for good cause shown and without fault on the part of the member, to accept a certification after the January 31 deadline; and

45. If a locality has adopted an ordinance pursuant to subsection D of § 58.1-3703, tangible personal property of a business that qualifies under such ordinance for the first two tax years in which the business is subject to tax upon its personal property pursuant to this chapter. If a locality has not adopted such ordinance, this classification shall apply to the tangible personal property for such first two tax years of a business that otherwise meets the requirements of subsection D of § 58.1-3703; and

46. Miscellaneous and incidental tangible personal property employed in a trade or business that is not classified as machinery and tools pursuant to Article 2 (§ 58.1-3507 et seq.), merchants' capital pursuant to Article 3 (§ 58.1-3509 et seq.), or short-term rental property pursuant to Article 3.1 (§ 58.1-3510.4 et seq.), and has an original cost of less than \$250. A county, city, or town may allow a taxpayer to provide an aggregate estimate of the total cost of all such property owned by the taxpayer that qualifies under this subdivision, in lieu of a specific, itemized list.

B. The governing body of any county, city or town may levy a tax on the property enumerated in subsection A at different rates from the tax levied on other tangible personal property. The rates of tax and the rates of assessment shall (i) for purposes of subdivisions A 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11 through 20, 22 through 24, and 26 through 46, not exceed that applicable to the general class of tangible personal property, (ii) for purposes of subdivisions A 7, 9, 21, and 25, not exceed that applicable to machinery and tools, and (iii) for purposes of subdivision A 10, equal that applicable to real property. If a motor vehicle or an item of personal property is included in multiple classifications under subsection A, then the rate of tax shall be the lowest rate assigned to such classifications. If computer equipment and peripherals used in a data center could be included in classifications set forth in subdivision A 11, 26, 27, or 43, then the computer equipment and peripherals used in a data center shall be taxed at the lowest rate available under subdivision A 11, 26, 27, or 43.

C. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, for any qualifying vehicle, as such term is

244 defined in § 58.1-3523, (i) included in any separate class of property in subsection A and (ii) assessed
245 for tangible personal property taxes by a county, city, or town receiving a payment from the
246 Commonwealth under Chapter 35.1 (§ 58.1-3523 et seq.) for providing tangible personal property tax
247 relief, the county, city, or town may levy the tangible personal property tax on such qualifying vehicle
248 at a rate not to exceed the rates of tax and rates of assessment required under such chapter.