

# DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

## 2017 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Patron** Eileen Filler-Corn

3. **Committee** House Finance

4. **Title** Retail Sales and Use Tax; Exemption for  
Gun Safes

2. **Bill Number** HB 1710

**House of Origin:**

  X   **Introduced**

       **Substitute**

       **Engrossed**

**Second House:**

       **In Committee**

       **Substitute**

       **Enrolled**

### 5. **Summary/Purpose:**

This bill would provide an exemption from the Retail Sales and Use Tax for gun safes with a sales price of \$1,000 or less per item. Under the terms of the bill, a “gun safe” would be defined as a safe or vault that is 1) commercially available; 2) secured with a digital or dial combination locking mechanism or biometric locking mechanism, and 3) designed for the storage of a firearm or for ammunition for use in a firearm. Specifically excluded from this definition are glass-faced cabinets.

Under current law, gun safes are subject to the Retail Sales and Use Tax.

The effective date of this bill is not specified.

6. **Budget amendment necessary:** No.

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates are:** Not available. (See Line 8.)

### 8. **Fiscal implications:**

#### Administrative Costs Impact

The Department considers implementation of this bill as “routine” and does not require additional funding.

#### Revenue Impact

The exemption proposed in this bill would result in a state and local revenue loss, the magnitude of which is unknown. The Department of Taxation does not have data on gun safe sales, either nationally, or in the state of Virginia. However, because of the limitations of this exemption, the revenue loss is estimated to be minimal.

### 9. **Specific agency or political subdivisions affected:**

Department of Taxation

**10. Technical amendment necessary:** No.

**11. Other comments:**

Generally

The Retail Sales and Use Tax is imposed upon the charge for the sale or use of tangible personal property, unless an exemption applies. Virginia law defines “tangible personal property” as personal property that may be seen, weighed, measured, felt, or touched, or is in any other manner perceptible to the senses. As such, gun safes are subject to the sales and use tax under current law.

Manufacturer’s Coupons

Under the Department of Taxation’s current regulations, the value of a manufacturer’s coupon is included in the sales price of advertised merchandise. As an example, when a retailer accepts \$0.80 in cash and a manufacturer’s coupon valued at \$0.20, the Retail Sales and Use Tax is computed on the \$1.00. However, where a retailer redeems a manufacturer’s coupon for an amount in excess of the coupon’s value, “e.g., “double coupon value” discounts, the excess is treated as a discount to the product’s price, and may be deducted in computing the tax. Thus, if a retailer offers double value on a \$0.50 manufacturer’s coupon for a \$5.00 product, the sales tax would be computed on \$4.50, which is the sales price of the product, less the extra \$0.50 retailer discount.

In contrast, the value of a retailer’s coupon is not included in the sales price because the coupon has no value to the retailer.

Proposal

This bill would provide an exemption from the Retail Sales and Use Tax for gun safes with a sales price of \$1,000 or less per item. Under the terms of the bill, “gun safe” would be defined as a safe or vault that is 1) commercially available; 2) secured with a digital or dial combination locking mechanism or biometric locking mechanism, and 3) designed for the storage of a firearm or for ammunition for use in a firearm. Specifically excluded from this definition are glass-faced cabinets. Under the terms of the bill, if a retailer or manufacturer offers a discount, coupon, or other credit to reduce the final price to the customer, the discount must be taken into account in determining the sales price that is subject to the Retail Sales and Use Tax.

The effective date of this bill is not specified.

Similar Legislation

**House Bill 2393** would establish an income tax credit for 50 percent of the purchase price paid for any gun safe with a selling price of \$500 or less.

cc : Secretary of Finance

Date: 1/22/2017 VB

