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HOUSE BILL NO. 1916

Offered January 13, 2021

Prefiled January 10, 2021

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 58.1-439.12:08 and 58.1-439.12:11 of the Code of Virginia, relating to research and development tax credits.

Patrons—Mugler, Ayala, Keam, Murphy, Guzman, Hope, Scott and Simon

Referred to Committee on Finance

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 58.1-439.12:08 and 58.1-439.12:11 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 58.1-439.12:08. Research and development expenses tax credit.

A. As used in this section, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Virginia base amount" means the base amount as defined in § 41(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, that is attributable to Virginia, determined by (i) substituting "Virginia qualified research and development expense" for "qualified research expense"; (ii) substituting "Virginia qualified research" for "qualified research"; and (iii) instead of "fixed base percentage," using:

1. The percentage that the Virginia qualified research and development expense for the three taxable years immediately preceding the current taxable year in which the expense is incurred is of the taxpayer's total gross receipts for such years; or

2. The percentage that the Virginia qualified research and development expense for the applicable number of taxable years immediately preceding the current taxable year in which the expense is incurred is of the taxpayer's total gross receipts for such years, for the taxpayer that has fewer than three but at least one prior taxable year.

"Virginia gross receipts" means the same as "gross receipts" as defined in § 58.1-3700.1.

"Virginia qualified research" means qualified research, as defined in § 41(d) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, that is conducted in the Commonwealth.

"Virginia qualified research and development expenses" means qualified research expenses, as defined in § 41(b) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, incurred for Virginia qualified research.

B. 1. For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2011, but before January 1, 2025 2021, a taxpayer shall be allowed a credit against the tax levied pursuant to § 58.1-320 or 58.1-400 in an amount equal to (i) 15 percent of the first \$300,000 in Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year or (ii) 20 percent of the first \$300,000 in Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year if the Virginia qualified research was conducted in conjunction with a public or private institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, to the extent the expenses exceed the Virginia base amount for the taxpayer.

2. For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2021, but before January 1, 2025, a taxpayer shall be allowed a credit against the tax levied pursuant to § 58.1-320, 58.1-400, or 58.1-1202 in an amount equal to (i) 15 percent of the first \$300,000 in Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year or (ii) 20 percent of the first \$300,000 in Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year if the Virginia qualified research was conducted in conjunction with a public or private institution of higher education in the Commonwealth, to the extent the expenses exceed the Virginia base amount for the taxpayer.

C. 1. Effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2016, at the election of the taxpayer, the credit otherwise allowed under this section shall be computed under this subsection and shall equal 10 percent of the difference of (i) the Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year and (ii) 50 percent of the average Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer for the three taxable years immediately preceding the taxable year for which the credit is being determined. If the taxpayer did not pay or incur Virginia qualified research and development expenses in any one of the three taxable years immediately preceding the taxable year for which the credit is being determined, the tax credit shall equal five percent of the Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the relevant taxable year.

2. The aggregate amount of credits allowed to each taxpayer under this subsection shall not exceed \$45,000 for the taxable year, except that the aggregate amount of credits allowed to each taxpayer shall

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59 not exceed \$60,000 for the taxable year if the Virginia qualified research was conducted in conjunction  
60 with a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth or a private institution of higher  
61 education in the Commonwealth.

62 D. The aggregate amount of credits available under this section for each fiscal year of the  
63 Commonwealth shall be as follows:

64 1. For taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2014, but before January 1, 2016, the total  
65 amount of credits granted for each of fiscal years 2015 and 2016 shall not exceed \$6 million.

66 2. For taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2016, but before January 1, 2021, the total  
67 amount of credits granted for each fiscal year of the Commonwealth beginning with fiscal year 2017  
68 shall not exceed \$7 million.

69 3. For taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2021, the total amount of credits granted for  
70 each fiscal year of the Commonwealth beginning with fiscal year 2022 shall not exceed \$7.77 million.

71 E. A taxpayer meeting the requirements of this section shall be eligible to receive a tax credit as  
72 provided herein. The Department shall develop and publish guidelines for applications and such  
73 guidelines shall be exempt from the Administrative Process Act (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.). Applications must  
74 be received by the Department no later than September 1 of the calendar year following the close of the  
75 taxable year in which the expenses were paid or incurred. In the event that approved applications for the  
76 tax credits allowed under this section exceed the amount of credits specified in subsection D for the  
77 taxable year, the Department shall apportion the credits by dividing the amount of credits specified in  
78 subsection D by the total amount of tax credits approved, to determine the percentage of allowed tax  
79 credits each taxpayer shall receive. In the event that the total amount of approved tax credits under this  
80 section for all applications for any taxable year is less than the maximum amount of credits for the year  
81 as specified in subsection D, the Department shall allocate credits up to the maximum amount as  
82 specified in subsection D, on a pro rata basis, to taxpayers who are already approved for the tax credit  
83 for the taxable year, in the following amounts:

84 1. If the taxpayer computed the credit pursuant to subsection B, in an amount equal to 15 percent of  
85 the second \$300,000 in qualified research expenses during the taxable year or 20 percent of the second  
86 \$300,000 in qualified research expenses if the Virginia qualified research was conducted in conjunction  
87 with a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth or a private institution of higher  
88 education in the Commonwealth; or

89 2. If the taxpayer computed the credit under subdivision C 1, in an amount equal to the excess of the  
90 limitation set forth in subdivision C 2, up to an additional \$45,000 per taxpayer, or \$60,000 per taxpayer  
91 if the Virginia qualified research was conducted in conjunction with a public institution of higher  
92 education in the Commonwealth or a private institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.

93 F. If the amount of the credit allowed exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability for the taxable year, the  
94 amount that exceeds the tax liability shall be refunded to the taxpayer, subject to the limitations set forth  
95 in the guidelines developed by the Department.

96 G. Any taxpayer who claims the tax credit for Virginia qualified research and development expenses  
97 pursuant to this section shall not use such expenses as the basis for claiming any other credit provided  
98 under the Code of Virginia.

99 H. Effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2016, no taxpayer with Virginia  
100 qualified research and development expenses in excess of \$5 million for the taxable year shall claim  
101 both the credit allowed pursuant to this section and the credit allowed under § 58.1-439.12:11 for such  
102 year.

103 I. Credits granted to a partnership, limited liability company, or electing small business corporation  
104 (S corporation) shall be allocated to the individual partners, members, or shareholders, respectively, in  
105 proportion to their ownership interests in such entities or in accordance with a written agreement entered  
106 into by such individual partners, members, or shareholders, unless the partnership, limited liability  
107 company, or electing small business corporation (S corporation) elects for such credits not to be so  
108 allocated but to be received and claimed at the entity level by the partnership, limited liability company,  
109 or electing small business corporation (S corporation) pursuant to guidelines that shall be issued by the  
110 Department for purposes of such election.

111 J. The Department shall adopt guidelines to prescribe standards for determining when research and  
112 development is considered conducted in the Commonwealth for purposes of allowing the credit under  
113 this section. In adopting guidelines, the Department may consider (i) the location where the research and  
114 development is performed; (ii) the residence or business location of the taxpayer or taxpayers conducting  
115 the research and development; (iii) the location where supplies used in the research and development are  
116 consumed; and (iv) any other factors that the Department deems to be relevant.

117 K. The Tax Commissioner's annual report to the Governor on revenue collections by tax source shall  
118 include (i) the total number of applicants approved for tax credits pursuant to this section for the  
119 applicable tax year and (ii) the total amount of such tax credits approved for the applicable tax year.

120 L. The Department shall require taxpayers applying for the credit to provide information including (i)

121 the number of full-time employees employed by the taxpayer in the Commonwealth during the taxable  
 122 year for which the credit is sought; (ii) the taxpayer's sector or sectors according to the 2012 edition of  
 123 the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as published by the United States Census  
 124 Bureau; (iii) a brief description of the area, discipline, or field of Virginia qualified research performed  
 125 by the taxpayer; (iv) the total gross receipts or anticipated total gross receipts of the taxpayer for the  
 126 taxable year for which the credit is sought; and (v) whether the Virginia qualified research was  
 127 conducted in conjunction with a Virginia public or private college or university. The Department shall  
 128 aggregate and summarize the information collected and make it available to the Governor and any  
 129 member of the General Assembly upon request, regardless of the number of taxpayers applying for the  
 130 credit.

131 M. No tax credit shall be allowed pursuant to this section if the otherwise qualified research and  
 132 development expenses are paid for or incurred by a taxpayer for research conducted in the  
 133 Commonwealth on human cells or tissue derived from induced abortions or from stem cells obtained  
 134 from human embryos. The foregoing provision shall not apply to research conducted using stem cells  
 135 other than embryonic stem cells.

136 **§ 58.1-439.12:11. Major research and development expenses tax credit.**

137 A. As used in this section, unless the context requires a different meaning:

138 "Virginia qualified research" means qualified research, as defined in § 41(d) of the Internal Revenue  
 139 Code, as amended, that is conducted in the Commonwealth.

140 "Virginia qualified research and development expenses" means qualified research expenses, as  
 141 defined in § 41(b) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, incurred for Virginia qualified research.

142 B. 1. For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2016, but before January 1, ~~2025~~ 2021, a  
 143 taxpayer with Virginia qualified research and development expenses for the taxable year in excess of \$5  
 144 million shall be allowed a credit against the tax levied pursuant to § 58.1-320 or 58.1-400 in an amount  
 145 equal to 10 percent of the difference between (i) the Virginia qualified research and development  
 146 expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year and (ii) 50 percent of the average  
 147 Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer for the three  
 148 taxable years immediately preceding the taxable year for which the credit is being determined. If the  
 149 taxpayer did not pay or incur Virginia qualified research and development expenses in any one of the  
 150 three taxable years immediately preceding the taxable year for which the credit is being determined, the  
 151 tax credit shall equal five percent of the Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or  
 152 incurred by the taxpayer during the relevant taxable year.

153 2. For taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2021, but before January 1, 2025, a taxpayer  
 154 with Virginia qualified research and development expenses for the taxable year in excess of \$5 million  
 155 shall be allowed a credit against the tax levied pursuant to § 58.1-320, 58.1-400, or 58.1-1202 in an  
 156 amount equal to 10 percent of the difference between (i) the Virginia qualified research and  
 157 development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer during the taxable year and (ii) 50 percent of  
 158 the average Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid or incurred by the taxpayer for  
 159 the three taxable years immediately preceding the taxable year for which the credit is being determined.  
 160 If the taxpayer did not pay or incur Virginia qualified research and development expenses in any one of  
 161 the three taxable years immediately preceding the taxable year for which the credit is being determined,  
 162 the tax credit shall equal five percent of the Virginia qualified research and development expenses paid  
 163 or incurred by the taxpayer during the relevant taxable year.

164 C. 1. For taxable years beginning before January 1, 2021, the aggregate amount of credits granted for  
 165 each fiscal year of the Commonwealth pursuant to this section shall not exceed \$20 million.

166 2. For taxable years beginning on and after January 1, 2021, the aggregate amount of credits granted  
 167 for each fiscal year of the Commonwealth pursuant to this section shall not exceed \$24 million.

168 D. In the event that approved applications for the tax credits allowed under this section exceed the  
 169 limit described in subsection C for any taxable year, the Department shall apportion the credits by  
 170 dividing such limit by the total amount of tax credits approved, to determine the percentage of allowed  
 171 tax credits each taxpayer shall receive.

172 E. The amount of the credit claimed for the taxable year shall not exceed 75 percent of the total  
 173 amount of tax imposed by this chapter upon the taxpayer for the taxable year. Any credit not usable for  
 174 the taxable year for which the credit was first allowed may be carried over for credit against the income  
 175 taxes of the taxpayer in the next 10 succeeding taxable years or until the total amount of the tax credit  
 176 has been taken, whichever is sooner.

177 F. Any taxpayer who claims the tax credit for Virginia qualified research and development expenses  
 178 pursuant to this section shall not use such expenses as the basis for claiming any other credit provided  
 179 under the Code of Virginia.

180 G. Credits granted to a partnership, limited liability company, or electing small business corporation  
 181 (S corporation) shall be allocated to the individual partners, members, or shareholders, respectively, in

182 proportion to their ownership interests in such entities or in accordance with a written agreement entered  
183 into by such individual partners, members, or shareholders.

184 H. The Department shall develop and publish guidelines under this section including guidelines for  
185 applying for the tax credit. Such guidelines shall be exempt from the Administrative Process Act  
186 (§ 2.2-4000 et seq.). Applications for the tax credit must be received by the Department no later than  
187 September 1 of the calendar year following the close of the taxable year in which the expenses were  
188 paid or incurred.

189 The Department shall also adopt guidelines to prescribe standards for determining when research and  
190 development is considered conducted in the Commonwealth for purposes of allowing the credit under  
191 this section. In adopting guidelines, the Department may consider (i) the location where the research and  
192 development is performed; (ii) the residence or business location of the taxpayer or taxpayers conducting  
193 the research and development; (iii) the location where supplies used in the research and development are  
194 consumed; and (iv) any other factors that the Department deems to be relevant.

195 I. No tax credit shall be allowed pursuant to this section, if the otherwise qualified research and  
196 development expenses are paid for or incurred by a taxpayer for research conducted in the  
197 Commonwealth on human cells or tissue derived from induced abortions or from stem cells obtained  
198 from human embryos. The foregoing provision shall not apply to research conducted using stem cells  
199 other than embryonic stem cells.