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## SENATE BILL NO. 735

## AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Finance  
on February 15, 1999)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Marye)

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 58.1-611.1, relating to tax on food purchased for human consumption; Food Tax Reduction Program.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 58.1-611.1 as follows:

§ 58.1-611.1. Rate of tax on sales of food purchased for human consumption; Food Tax Reduction Program.

A. Subject to the conditions of subsections D and E, 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 March 31, 2001, 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. From April 1, 2001, through March 31, 2002, the tax rate on such food shall be two 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, (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 percent shall be used for general fund purposes.

3. From April 1, 2002, through March 31, 2003, the tax rate on such food shall be two 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-half percent shall be used for general fund purposes.

4. On and after April 1, 2003, 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.

D. Notwithstanding the tax rates set forth in subsection A, the rate of tax on sales of food purchased for human consumption for any twelve-month period beginning on or after April 1, 2001, shall not be reduced below the rate then in effect for the Commonwealth's current fiscal year if:

1. Actual general fund revenues for the fiscal year preceding a fiscal year in which a rate reduction is contemplated in subsection A do not exceed the official general fund revenue estimates for such preceding fiscal year, as estimated in the most recently enacted and approved general appropriation act, by at least one percent; or

2. Any of the events listed in subsection C of § 58.1-3524 or subsection B of § 58.1-3536 have occurred during the then current fiscal year.

E. If the tax rate on food purchased for human consumption remains the same for the period January 1, 2000, through March 31, 2001, and the subsequent twelve-month period beginning on April 1, 2001, or with respect to any consecutive twelve-month periods beginning on and after April 1, 2001, the tax rate on such food shall remain the same unless none of the conditions described in subsection D have occurred, in which event the tax rate on food purchased for human consumption for the immediately following twelve-month period shall be equal to the next lowest tax rate listed in subsection A.

F. There is hereby created on the books of the Comptroller a nonreverting fund entitled the Food

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**60** *Tax Reserve Fund which shall be used solely for the statutory purposes of the Food Tax Reduction*  
**61** *Program as established by this section, and as may be provided for in the general appropriation act.*  
**62** *For the purpose of the Comptroller's preliminary and final annual reports required by § 2.1-207, all*  
**63** *balances remaining in the Fund on June 30 of each year shall be considered a portion of the fund*  
**64** *balance of the general fund of the state treasury.*