

# DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

## 2016 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. **Patron** Frank M. Ruff, Jr.

3. **Committee** Senate Finance

4. **Title** Retail Sales and Use Tax; Data Center  
Exemption

2. **Bill Number** SB 64

**House of Origin:**

  X   **Introduced**

       **Substitute**

       **Engrossed**

**Second House:**

       **In Committee**

       **Substitute**

       **Enrolled**

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

This bill would remove the sunset date of the Retail Sales and Use Tax exemption for purchases of equipment by data centers and their tenants. The exemption is due to expire June 30, 2020.

The current Retail Sales and Use Tax exemption is available for data centers that i) are located in a Virginia locality; ii) result in a new capital investment of at least \$150 million on or after January 1, 2009; and iii) result in the creation by the data center and its tenants, on or after July 1, 2009, of at least 50 new jobs paying at least one and one-half the prevailing average wage in the locality, or 25 new jobs paying at least one and one-half the prevailing average wage in the locality if the data center is located in a locality that has an unemployment rate for the preceding year of at least 150 percent of the average statewide unemployment rate or is located in an enterprise zone. The data center operator must enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority in order to qualify for the exemption. The exemption also extends to purchases made by tenants of a data center that meets the requirements of the data center exemption.

The effective date of this bill is not specified.

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

7. **Fiscal Impact Estimates are:** Preliminary. (See Line 8.)

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

#### Administrative Costs

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

## Revenue Impact

Though the current Retail Sales and Use Tax data center exemption is set to expire June 30, 2020, the revenue forecasts assume the extension of all expiring exemptions. As the revenue forecasts assume the extension of all expiring exemptions, removing the sunset date for the exemption would have no revenue impact from a budget perspective.

Based on data from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority regarding planned data center investment, the estimated revenue loss from the Retail Sales and Use Tax exemption for data centers is \$49.3 million in Fiscal Year 2015, \$51.1 million in Fiscal Year 2016, \$52.0 million in Fiscal Year 2017, \$53.0 million in Fiscal Year 2018, \$54.2 million in Fiscal Year 2019, \$55.4 million in Fiscal Year 2020, and \$56.6 million in Fiscal Year 2021.

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

Department of Taxation  
Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority

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

### **11. Other comments:**

#### Generally

Under current law, beginning July 1, 2010 and ending June 30, 2020, computer equipment purchased or leased by certain data centers for the processing, storage, retrieval or communication of data, including but not limited to servers, routers, connections and other enabling hardware, is exempt from the Retail Sales and Use Tax. Purchased or leased upgrades, additions to, or replacement of the computer equipment in a qualifying facility are equally exempt. The exemption does not apply to separately sold computer software or general building improvements or fixtures.

In order to be eligible for this exemption, the data center must be located in a Virginia locality and must result in new capital investment of at least \$150 million on or after January 1, 2009. The data center and its tenants, if applicable, also must create, on or after July 1, 2009, at least 50 new jobs paying at least one and one-half the prevailing average wage in the locality or at least 25 new jobs paying at least one and one-half the prevailing average wage if the locality has an unemployment rate for the preceding year of at least 150 percent of the average statewide unemployment rate or is located in an enterprise zone. The investment must be made in accordance with a memorandum of understanding with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority. The exemption also extends to purchases made by tenants of a data center that meets the requirements of the data center exemption.

In Fiscal Year 2015, 13 data center operators and 63 data center tenants qualified for the Retail Sales and Use Tax exemption with an estimated \$843.7 million in total qualifying investment.

## Proposal

This bill would remove the sunset date of the Retail Sales and Use Tax exemption for purchases of equipment by data centers and their tenants. The exemption is due to expire June 30, 2020.

The effective date of this bill is not specified.

## Similar Legislation

**House Bill 120** would provide that data centers located on property not zoned for industrial use and require the use of an aboveground 150-kilovolt or greater electrical transmission line are excluded from using the sales tax exemption for data centers and certain income tax apportionment provisions beginning January 1, 2016.

**House Bill 121** would provide that data centers located on property not zoned for industrial use, are within one-third of a mile of an interstate highway, and require the use of an above ground 150-kilovolt or greater electrical transmission line are excluded from using the sales tax exemption for data centers and certain income tax apportionment provisions beginning January 1, 2016.

**House Bill 872** would extend the sunset date of the Retail Sales and Use Tax exemption for purchases of equipment by data centers and their tenants from June 30, 2020 to June 30, 2023.

cc : Secretary of Finance

Date: 1/16/2016 AM  
DLAS File Name: SB64F161