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HOUSE BILL NO. 1131

Offered January 8, 2020

Prefiled January 7, 2020

A BILL to amend and reenact § 58.1-3660 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 26 of Title 58.1 a section numbered 58.1-2636, relating to solar energy projects; revenue share assessment.

Patrons—Jones, Simonds and Willett

Referred to Committee on Finance

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 58.1-3660 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 26 of Title 58.1 a section numbered 58.1-2636 as follows:

§ 58.1-2636. Revenue share for solar energy projects.

A. Any locality may by ordinance assess a revenue share of up to \$0.55 per megawatt hour on any solar photovoltaic (electric energy) project.

B. Such ordinance may provide that the owner of a project shall provide to the locality in which it is located, data reflecting the annual megawatt hours generated by such project by March 30 of each calendar year such project is in commercial operation.

C. For purposes of this section, "solar photovoltaic (electric energy) project" shall not include any project that is (i) described in § 56-594, 56-594.01, or 56-594.2 or Chapters 358 and 382 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013, as amended; (ii) 20 megawatts or less, as measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity, for which an initial interconnection request form has been filed with an electric utility or a regional transmission organization on or before December 31, 2018; or (iii) five megawatts or less.

§ 58.1-3660. Certified pollution control equipment and facilities.

A. Certified pollution control equipment and facilities, as defined herein, are hereby declared to be a separate class of property and shall constitute a classification for local taxation separate from other such classification of real or personal property and such property. Certified pollution control equipment and facilities shall be exempt from state and local taxation pursuant to Article X, Section 6 (d) of the Constitution of Virginia.

B. As used in this section:

"Certified pollution control equipment and facilities" shall mean any property, including real or personal property, equipment, facilities, or devices, used primarily for the purpose of abating or preventing pollution of the atmosphere or waters of the Commonwealth and which the state certifying authority having jurisdiction with respect to such property has certified to the Department of Taxation as having been constructed, reconstructed, erected, or acquired in conformity with the state program or requirements for abatement or control of water or atmospheric pollution or contamination. Such property shall include, but is not limited to, any equipment used to grind, chip, or mulch trees, tree stumps, underbrush, and other vegetative cover for reuse as mulch, compost, landfill gas, synthetic or natural gas recovered from waste or other fuel, and equipment used in collecting, processing, and distributing, or generating electricity from, landfill gas or synthetic or natural gas recovered from waste, whether or not such property has been certified to the Department of Taxation by a state certifying authority. Such property shall also include solar energy equipment, facilities, or devices owned or operated by a business that collect, generate, transfer, or store thermal or electric energy whether or not such property has been certified to the Department of Taxation by a state certifying authority.

C. For solar photovoltaic (electric energy) systems, this exemption applies only to (i) projects equaling 20 megawatts or less, as measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity, for which an initial interconnection request form has been filed with an electric utility or a regional transmission organization on or before December 31, 2018; (ii) projects equaling 20 megawatts or less, as measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity, that serve any of the public institutions of higher education listed in § 23.1-100 or any private college as defined in § 23.1-105; (iii) 80 percent of the assessed value of projects for which an initial interconnection request form has been filed with an electric utility or a regional transmission organization (a) between January 1, 2015, and June 30, 2018, for projects greater than 20 megawatts or (b) on or after July 1, 2018, for projects greater than 20 megawatts and less than 150 megawatts, as measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity, and that are first in service on or after January 1, 2017; (iv) projects equaling five megawatts or less, as

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59 measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity, for which an initial interconnection request
60 form has been filed with an electric utility or a regional transmission organization on or after January 1,
61 2019; and (v) 80 percent of the assessed value of all other projects equaling more than five megawatts
62 and less than 150 megawatts, as measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity for which an
63 initial interconnection request form has been filed with an electric utility or a regional transmission
64 organization on or after January 1, 2019.

65 *The D. If a locality adopts an energy revenue share ordinance under § 58.1-2636, the exemption for*
66 *solar photovoltaic (electric energy) projects greater than 20 five megawatts, as measured in alternating*
67 *current (AC) generation capacity, shall not apply to projects upon which construction begins after*
68 *January 1, 2024 be 100 percent when (i) an application has been filed with the locality and (ii) a*
69 *decision has been made on such application after July 1, 2020. If a locality continues to assess*
70 *machinery and tools tax under this section, the exemption for solar photovoltaic (electric energy)*
71 *projects greater than five megawatts, as measured in alternating current (AC) generation capacity, for*
72 *which an initial interconnection request form has been filed with an electric utility or a regional*
73 *transmission organization, shall be 80 percent when an application has been filed with the locality prior*
74 *to July 1, 2030. For purposes of this subsection, "application has been filed with the locality" means an*
75 *applicant has filed an application for a zoning confirmation from the locality for a by-right use, or an*
76 *application for land use approval under the locality's zoning ordinance to include an application for a*
77 *conditional use permit, special use permit, special exception, or other application as set out the*
78 *locality's zoning ordinance.*

79 *E. For pollution control equipment and facilities certified by the Virginia Department of Health, this*
80 *exemption applies only to onsite sewage systems that serve 10 or more households, use*
81 *nitrogen-reducing processes and technology, and are constructed, wholly or partially, with public funds.*
82 *All such property as described in this definition shall not include the land on which such equipment or*
83 *facilities are located.*

84 "State certifying authority" shall mean the State Water Control Board or the Virginia Department of
85 Health, for water pollution; the State Air Pollution Control Board, for air pollution; the Department of
86 Mines, Minerals and Energy, for solar energy projects and for coal, oil, and gas production, including
87 gas, natural gas, and coalbed methane gas; and the Virginia Waste Management Board, for waste
88 disposal facilities, natural gas recovered from waste facilities, and landfill gas production facilities, and
89 shall include any interstate agency authorized to act in place of a certifying authority of the
90 Commonwealth.

91 **2. That no revenue share established pursuant to this act shall retroactively apply to any solar**
92 **photovoltaic (electric energy) project for which an application was filed with the locality prior to**
93 **July 1, 2020, unless (i) the locality and the applicant or owner agree to revise any existing**
94 **voluntary payment agreement, or enter into any new voluntary payment agreement, under which**
95 **the applicant or owner agree to voluntarily waive a portion of the exemption from machinery and**
96 **tools tax as provided in § 58.1-3660 of the Code of Virginia, as amended by this act, and (ii) the**
97 **locality and the applicant or owner agree to substitute the amount of such voluntary payment for**
98 **a similar amount of a solar energy revenue share authorized by § 58.1-2636 of the Code of**
99 **Virginia, as created by this act. However, nothing in this act shall preclude an applicant or owner**
100 **of a solar photovoltaic (electric energy) project previously approved by a locality from entering**
101 **into a written agreement to submit such project to a local ordinance that requires a solar energy**
102 **revenue share to be paid as authorized by § 58.1-2636 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this**
103 **act.**