S-0617.1

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**SENATE BILL 5260**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Senator Warnick

AN ACT Relating to the continuation of tax preferences supporting the solar silicon manufacturing industry; amending RCW 82.04.294 and 82.08.9651; creating new sections; providing an effective date; providing expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for the tax preference contained in section 2 of this act. This performance statement is only intended to be used for subsequent evaluation of the tax preference. It is not intended to create a private right of action by any party or be used to determine eligibility for preferential tax treatment.

(2) The legislature categorizes this tax preference as one intended to improve industry competitiveness and to create and retain jobs as indicated in RCW 82.32.808(2) (b) and (c).

(3) It is the legislature's specific public policy objective to maintain and grow jobs in the solar silicon industry. Trade disputes currently threaten employment in this sector. It is the legislature's intent to extend by ten years the preferential tax rates for manufacturers and wholesalers of specific solar energy material and parts in order to maintain and grow jobs in the solar silicon industry.

(4) If a review finds that the number of people employed by the solar silicon industry in Washington is the same or more than in 2015, and that at least sixty percent of employees earn sixty thousand dollars a year or more, then the legislature intends to extend the expiration date of the tax preference.

(5) In order to obtain the data necessary to perform the review in subsection (4) of this section, the joint legislative audit and review committee may refer to the department of revenue's annual survey data.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.04.294 and 2013 2nd sp.s. c 13 s 902 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Upon every person engaging within this state in the business of manufacturing solar energy systems using photovoltaic modules or stirling converters, or of manufacturing solar grade silicon, silicon solar wafers, silicon solar cells, thin film solar devices, or compound semiconductor solar wafers to be used exclusively in components of such systems; as to such persons the amount of tax with respect to such business is, in the case of manufacturers, equal to the value of the product manufactured, or in the case of processors for hire, equal to the gross income of the business, multiplied by the rate of 0.275 percent.

(2) Upon every person engaging within this state in the business of making sales at wholesale of solar energy systems using photovoltaic modules or stirling converters, or of solar grade silicon, silicon solar wafers, silicon solar cells, thin film solar devices, or compound semiconductor solar wafers to be used exclusively in components of such systems, manufactured by that person; as to such persons the amount of tax with respect to such business is equal to the gross proceeds of sales of the solar energy systems using photovoltaic modules or stirling converters, or of the solar grade silicon to be used exclusively in components of such systems, multiplied by the rate of 0.275 percent.

(3) Silicon solar wafers, silicon solar cells, thin film solar devices, solar grade silicon, or compound semiconductor solar wafers are "semiconductor materials" for the purposes of RCW 82.08.9651 and 82.12.9651.

(4) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section.

(a) "Compound semiconductor solar wafers" means a semiconductor solar wafer composed of elements from two or more different groups of the periodic table.

(b) "Module" means the smallest nondivisible self-contained physical structure housing interconnected photovoltaic cells and providing a single direct current electrical output.

(c) "Photovoltaic cell" means a device that converts light directly into electricity without moving parts.

(d) "Silicon solar cells" means a photovoltaic cell manufactured from a silicon solar wafer.

(e) "Silicon solar wafers" means a silicon wafer manufactured for solar conversion purposes.

(f) "Solar energy system" means any device or combination of devices or elements that rely upon direct sunlight as an energy source for use in the generation of electricity.

(g) "Solar grade silicon" means high‑purity silicon used exclusively in components of solar energy systems using photovoltaic modules to capture direct sunlight. "Solar grade silicon" does not include silicon used in semiconductors.

(h) "Stirling converter" means a device that produces electricity by converting heat from a solar source utilizing a stirling engine.

(i) "Thin film solar devices" means a nonparticipating substrate on which various semiconducting materials are deposited to produce a photovoltaic cell that is used to generate electricity.

(5) A person reporting under the tax rate provided in this section must file a complete annual survey with the department under RCW 82.32.585.

(6) This section expires June 30, ((~~2017~~)) 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  (1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for the tax preference contained in section 4 of this act. This performance statement is only intended to be used for subsequent evaluation of the tax preference. It is not intended to create a private right of action by any party or be used to determine eligibility for preferential tax treatment.

(2) The legislature categorizes this tax preference as one intended to induce certain designated behavior by taxpayers, improve industry competitiveness, and create or retain jobs, as indicated in RCW 82.32.808(2) (a) through (c).

(3) It is the legislature's specific public policy objective to encourage significant construction projects; retain, expand, and attract semiconductor business; and encourage and expand family-wage jobs. It is the legislature's intent to extend by ten years the preferential tax rate for sales of gases and chemicals used in the production of semiconductor materials, in order to encourage the growth and retention of the semiconductor business in Washington, thereby strengthening Washington's competitiveness with other states for manufacturing investment.

(4) If a review finds that the number of construction projects in the industry has increased, and that number of people employed by the solar silicon industry in Washington is the same or more than in 2015, and that at least sixty percent of employees earn sixty thousand dollars a year, then the legislature intends to extend the expiration date of the tax preference.

(5) In order to obtain the data necessary to perform the review in subsection (4) of this section, the joint legislative audit and review committee may refer to the department of revenue's annual survey data.

**Sec.**  RCW 82.08.9651 and 2014 c 97 s 405 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The tax levied by RCW 82.08.020 does not apply to sales of gases and chemicals used by a manufacturer or processor for hire in the production of semiconductor materials. This exemption is limited to gases and chemicals used in the production process to grow the product, deposit or grow permanent or sacrificial layers on the product, to etch or remove material from the product, to anneal the product, to immerse the product, to clean the product, and other such uses whereby the gases and chemicals come into direct contact with the product during the production process, or uses of gases and chemicals to clean the chambers and other like equipment in which such processing takes place. For the purposes of this section, "semiconductor materials" has the meaning provided in RCW 82.04.2404 and 82.04.294(3).

(2)(a) Except as provided under (b) of this subsection (2), a person claiming the exemption under this section must file a complete annual survey with the department under RCW 82.32.585.

(b) A person claiming the exemption under this section and who is required to file a complete annual report with the department under RCW 82.32.534 as a result of claiming the tax preference provided by RCW 82.04.2404 is not also required to file a complete annual survey under RCW 82.32.585.

(3) No application is necessary for the tax exemption. The person is subject to all of the requirements of chapter 82.32 RCW.

(4) This section expires ((~~December 1, 2018~~)) July 1, 2027.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  Sections 1 and 2 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect June 30, 2017.

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