

RCW 82.32.558 Tax deferral—Eligible projects—Application.

(Expires January 1, 2030.) (1) Until October 1, 2019, a qualifying business may apply for a deferral of taxes on an eligible project. Application must be made to the department in a form and manner prescribed by the department. The application must contain information regarding the location of the project, estimated or actual costs of the project, time schedules for completion and operation of the project, and other information required by the department. The department must rule on the application within sixty days.

(2) If the department approves an application for a deferral of taxes under this section, the department must issue a sales and use tax deferral certificate for state and local sales and use taxes due under chapters 82.08, 82.12, 82.14, and 81.104 RCW. This certificate expires on the date the eligible project becomes operationally complete. The certificate may only be used for sales and use tax liability incurred after the date the department issued the certificate.

(3) A recipient of a certificate must notify the department when its eligible project is operationally complete. The department must review the qualifying business's records after the eligible project is operationally complete to ensure the correct amount of taxes has been reported and will be repaid.

(4) (a) For local sales and use taxes, the recipient of the certificate must begin paying deferred sales and use taxes in the first calendar year after the date certified by the department as the date on which the eligible project is operationally complete. The first payment is due on January 1st of the first calendar year after such certified date, with subsequent annual payments due on January 1st of the following seven years. Each payment must equal twelve and one-half percent of the tax due plus interest.

(b) For state sales and use taxes, the recipient of the certificate must repay all deferred state sales and use taxes by June 30, 2023.

(c) The department must assess interest, but not penalties, on the deferred taxes. The interest must be assessed at the rate provided for delinquent taxes under this chapter, retroactively to the date the project was certified to be operationally complete, and will accrue until the deferred taxes are repaid.

(5) The department may authorize an accelerated repayment schedule upon request of the qualifying business.

(6) The debt for taxes due is not extinguished by insolvency or other failure of the qualifying business. Transfer of ownership does not terminate the deferral if the transferee agrees in writing to be bound by the requirements of this section and receives approval from the department. If the department approves the transfer of the deferral to a transferee, such approval not to be unreasonably withheld, conditioned, or delayed, the transferee is solely liable for repayment of the deferred taxes.

(7) If the eligible project is not operationally complete within three calendar years from the date that the department issued the certificate for the project, or if at any time the department finds that the project is not eligible for a deferral under this section, the amount of taxes outstanding for the project is immediately due and payable. If taxes must be repaid under this subsection, the department must assess interest at the rate provided for delinquent taxes under

this chapter retroactively to the date of issuance of the certificate, but not penalties, on amounts due under this subsection.

(8) Applications and any other information received by the department under this section are not confidential under RCW 82.32.330. This chapter applies to the administration of this section.

(9) The definitions in this subsection apply throughout this section unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

(a) "Eligible project" means a project consisting of either or both (i) a qualifying arena, associated parking structures, plazas, public spaces, and one or more tunnels connecting the arena and parking structures, or (ii) an ice hockey practice facility.

(b) "Ice hockey practice facility" means one or more contiguous structures of up to two hundred thousand square feet located within ten miles of a qualifying arena that (i) contains at least three ice rinks, and (ii) is being developed to attract a professional ice hockey franchise. An "ice hockey practice facility" may include ice rinks, spectator viewing locations, locker rooms, strength and conditioning rooms, administrative offices, retail space, food service facilities, and other amenities related to the operation of a state-of-the-art ice hockey center.

(c) "Operationally complete" means the project is capable of being used for its intended purpose as described in the application.

(d) "Personal property" means tangible personal property with a useful life of one year or more that is used in the operation of the eligible project.

(e) "Project" means the construction of new improvements, the renovation of existing improvements, the acquisition and installation of fixtures that are permanently affixed to and become a physical part of those improvements, personal property, and site preparation. "Project" includes materials used and labor and services rendered in respect to the planning, site preparation, construction, renovation, and installation.

(f) "Qualifying arena" means a multipurpose sports and entertainment facility owned by the largest city in a county with a population of at least one million five hundred thousand that is being redeveloped to attract professional ice hockey and basketball league franchises.

(g) "Qualifying business" means a business entity that exists for the primary purpose of engaging in commercial activity for profit and has entered into a lease or occupancy agreement with the fee owner of a qualifying arena and/or ice hockey practice facility to engage in the development of an eligible project.

(h) "Site preparation" includes soil testing, site clearing and grading, demolition, or any other related activities that are initiated before construction.

(10) This section expires January 1, 2030. [2019 c 347 s 2.]

Tax preference performance statement—2019 c 347: "(1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for the tax preference contained in section 2, chapter 347, Laws of 2019. 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 provide tax relief for certain businesses or individuals

and to accomplish a general purpose as indicated in RCW 82.32.808(2) (e) and (f).

(3) It is the legislature's specific public policy objective to increase the fiscal stability of multipurpose sports and entertainment arenas in Washington state and thereby strengthen the economic vitality of the communities in which the arenas and practice facilities are located.

(4) To measure the effectiveness of the tax preference in achieving the specific public policy objective described in this act, the joint legislative audit and review committee must evaluate this tax preference. In evaluating the tax preference, the joint legislative audit and review committee may refer to data provided to the department of revenue." [2019 c 347 s 1.]

Effective date—2019 c 347: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [May 9, 2019]." [2019 c 347 s 4.]