

RCW 82.04.294 Tax on manufacturers or wholesalers of solar energy systems. (Expires July 1, 2032.)

(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 tax performance report with the department under RCW 82.32.534.

(6) This section expires July 1, 2032. [2022 c 172 § 2; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 § 403; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 § 402; 2013 2nd sp.s. c 13 §

902; 2011 c 179 § 1; 2010 c 114 § 109; 2009 c 469 § 501; 2007 c 54 § 8; 2005 c 301 § 2.]

Tax preference performance statement—2022 c 172 § 2: "(1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for the tax preference contained in section 2, chapter 172, Laws of 2022. 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 five 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 2019, and that at least 60 percent of employees earn \$60,000 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." [2022 c 172 § 3.]

Effective date—2022 c 172: "This act takes effect July 1, 2022." [2022 c 172 § 4.]

Tax preference performance statement—2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 §§ 402 and 403: "(1) This section is the tax preference performance statement for the tax preferences contained in sections 402 and 403, chapter 37, Laws of 2017 3rd sp. sess. This performance statement is only intended to be used for subsequent evaluation of the tax preferences. 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 these tax preferences as ones 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." [2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 § 401.]

Effective date—2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 §§ 401 and 402: "Sections 401 and 402 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." [2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 § 1403.]

Effective date—2017 3rd sp.s. c 37 §§ 101-104, 403, 503, 506, 508, 510, 512, 514, 516, 518, 520, 522, 524, 526, 703, 705, 707, and 801-803: See note following RCW 82.04.2404.

Findings—Intent—2013 2nd sp.s. c 13: "(1) The legislature finds that to attract and maintain clean energy technology manufacturing businesses, a competitive business climate is crucial. The legislature further finds that specific tax preferences can facilitate a positive business climate in Washington. The legislature further finds that businesses in the solar silicon industry have had to reduce employment due to global conditions. Therefore, the legislature intends to extend a preferential business and occupation tax rate to manufacturers and wholesalers of specific solar energy material and parts to maintain and grow jobs in the solar silicon industry.

(2) The joint legislative audit and review committee, as part of its tax preference review process, must assess the actual fiscal impact of this tax preference in relation to the fiscal estimate for the tax preference and assess changes in employment for firms claiming the preferential tax rate." [2013 2nd sp.s. c 13 § 901.]

Effective date—2013 2nd sp.s. c 13: See note following RCW 82.04.43393.

Application—Finding—Intent—2010 c 114: See notes following RCW 82.32.534.

Effective date—2009 c 469: See note following RCW 82.08.962.

Severability—2007 c 54: See note following RCW 82.04.050.

Findings—Intent—2005 c 301: "The legislature finds that the welfare of the people of the state of Washington is positively impacted through the encouragement and expansion of key growth industries in the state. The legislature further finds that targeting tax incentives to focus on key growth industries is an important strategy to enhance the state's business climate.

A recent report by the Washington State University energy program recognized the solar electric industry as one of the state's important growth industries. It is of great concern that businesses in this industry have been increasingly expanding and relocating their operations elsewhere. The report indicates that additional incentives for the solar electric industry are needed in recognition of the unique forces and issues involved in business decisions in this industry.

Therefore, the legislature intends to enact comprehensive tax incentives for the solar electric industry that address activities of the manufacture of these products and to encourage these industries to locate in Washington. Tax incentives for the solar electric industry are important in both retention and expansion of existing business and attraction of new businesses, all of which will strengthen this growth industry within our state, will create jobs, and will bring many indirect benefits to the state." [2005 c 301 § 1.]

Effective date—2005 c 301: "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 July 1, 2005." [2005 c 301 § 6.]