CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6277

Chapter 194, Laws of 2012

62nd Legislature 2012 Regular Session

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION--MULTIPLE-UNIT DWELLINGS--URBAN CENTERS

EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/07/12

YEAS 42 NAYS 6 I, Thomas Hoemann, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that BRAD OWEN the attached is SUBSTITUTE SENATE President of the Senate BILL 6277 as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives Passed by the House March 8, 2012 on the dates hereon set forth. YEAS 68 NAYS 30 THOMAS HOEMANN FRANK CHOPP Secretary Speaker of the House of Representatives

Approved March 29, 2012, 7:32 p.m.

Passed by the Senate March 8, 2012

FILED

CERTIFICATE

March 29, 2012

CHRISTINE GREGOIRE

Secretary of State State of Washington

Governor of the State of Washington

SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 6277

AS AMENDED BY THE HOUSE

Passed Legislature - 2012 Regular Session

State of Washington 62nd

62nd Legislature

2012 Regular Session

By Senate Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Conway, Becker, Kastama, Schoesler, Kilmer, Kohl-Welles, and Regala)

READ FIRST TIME 02/27/12.

- AN ACT Relating to creating authority for counties to exempt from property taxation new and rehabilitated multiple-unit dwellings in certain unincorporated urban centers; amending RCW 84.14.007, 84.14.030, 84.14.040, 84.14.050, 84.14.070, 84.14.090, 84.14.100, and 84.14.110; and reenacting and amending RCW 84.14.010 and 84.14.060.
- 6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:
- 7 **Sec. 1.** RCW 84.14.007 and 2007 c 430 s 2 are each amended to read 8 as follows:
- 9 is purpose of this chapter to encourage increased 10 residential opportunities, including affordable housing opportunities, 11 in cities that are required to plan or choose to plan under the growth 12 management act within urban centers where the governing authority of affected city found there is insufficient 13 has housing including affordable housing opportunities. 14 opportunities, Ιt further the purpose of this chapter to stimulate the construction of 15 new multifamily housing and the rehabilitation of existing vacant and 16 underutilized buildings for multifamily housing in urban centers having 17 18 insufficient housing opportunities that will increase and improve 19 residential opportunities, including affordable housing opportunities,

- 1 within these urban centers. To achieve these purposes, this chapter
- 2 provides for special valuations in residentially deficient urban
- 3 centers for eligible improvements associated with multiunit housing,
- 4 which includes affordable housing. It is an additional purpose of this
- 5 <u>chapter to allow certain counties to stimulate housing opportunities</u>
- 6 <u>near_college_campuses_to_promote_dense, transit-oriented, walkable</u>
- 7 college communities.

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- 8 Sec. 2. RCW 84.14.010 and 2007 c 430 s 3 and 2007 c 185 s 1 are each reenacted and amended to read as follows:
 - Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.
 - (1) "Campus facilities master plan" means the area that is defined by the University of Washington as necessary for the future growth and development of its campus facilities for branch campuses authorized under RCW 28B.45.020.
 - (2) "City" means either (a) a city or town with a population of at least fifteen thousand, (b) the largest city or town, if there is no city or town with a population of at least fifteen thousand, located in a county planning under the growth management act, or (c) a city or town with a population of at least five thousand located in a county subject to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.215.
 - (3) "Affordable housing" means residential housing that is rented by a person or household whose monthly housing costs, including utilities other than telephone, do not exceed thirty percent of the household's monthly income. For the purposes of housing intended for owner occupancy, "affordable housing" means residential housing that is within the means of low or moderate-income households.
- 28 (4) "County" means a county with an unincorporated population of at 29 least three hundred fifty thousand.
- 30 <u>(5)</u> "Household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together.
- (((5))) <u>(6)</u> "Low-income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is at or below eighty percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located, as reported by the United States department of housing and urban development. For cities located in high-cost areas, "low-income household" means a household

that has an income at or below one hundred percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located.

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 $((\frac{(6)}{(6)}))$ "Moderate-income household" means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose adjusted income is more than eighty percent but is at or below one hundred fifteen percent of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located, as reported by the United States department of housing and urban development. For cities located in high-cost areas, "moderate-income household" means a household that has an income that is more than one hundred percent, but at or below one hundred fifty percent, of the median family income adjusted for family size, for the county where the project is located.

 $((\frac{1}{1}))$ (8) "High cost area" means a county where the third quarter median house price for the previous year as reported by the Washington center for real estate research at Washington State University is equal to or greater than one hundred thirty percent of the statewide median house price published during the same time period.

 $((\frac{8}{0}))$ "Governing authority" means the local legislative authority of a city or a county having jurisdiction over the property for which an exemption may be applied for under this chapter.

 $((\frac{9}{10}))$ "Growth management act" means chapter 36.70A RCW.

(((10))) (11) "Multiple-unit housing" means a building having four or more dwelling units not designed or used as transient accommodations and not including hotels and motels. Multifamily units may result from new construction or rehabilitated or conversion of vacant, underutilized, or substandard buildings to multifamily housing.

(((11))) (12) "Owner" means the property owner of record.

 $((\frac{12}{12}))$ (13) "Permanent residential occupancy" means multiunit housing that provides either rental or owner occupancy nontransient basis. This includes owner-occupied or rental accommodation that is leased for a period of at least one month. This excludes hotels motels that predominately offer and rental accommodation on a daily or weekly basis.

(((13))) (14) "Rehabilitation improvements" means modifications to existing structures, that are vacant for twelve months or longer, that are made to achieve a condition of substantial compliance with existing

building codes or modification to existing occupied structures which
increase the number of multifamily housing units.

 $((\frac{14}{1}))$ (15) "Residential targeted area" means an area within an urban center that has been designated by the governing authority as a residential targeted area in accordance with this chapter. With respect to designations after July 1, 2007, "residential targeted area" may not include a campus facilities master plan.

(((15))) (16) "Substantial compliance" means compliance with local building or housing code requirements that are typically required for rehabilitation as opposed to new construction.

 $((\frac{16}{16}))$ <u>(17)</u> "Urban center" means a compact identifiable district where urban residents may obtain a variety of products and services. An urban center must contain:

- (a) Several existing or previous, or both, business establishments that may include but are not limited to shops, offices, banks, restaurants, governmental agencies;
- 17 (b) Adequate public facilities including streets, sidewalks, 18 lighting, transit, domestic water, and sanitary sewer systems; and
- 19 (c) A mixture of uses and activities that may include housing, 20 recreation, and cultural activities in association with either 21 commercial or office, or both, use.
- 22 **Sec. 3.** RCW 84.14.030 and 2007 c 430 s 5 are each amended to read 23 as follows:

An owner of property making application under this chapter must meet the following requirements:

- (1) The new or rehabilitated multiple-unit housing must be located in a residential targeted area as designated by the city or county;
- (2) The multiple-unit housing must meet guidelines as adopted by the governing authority that may include height, density, public benefit features, number and size of proposed development, parking, income limits for occupancy, limits on rents or sale prices, and other adopted requirements indicated necessary by the city or county. The required amenities should be relative to the size of the project and tax benefit to be obtained;
- 35 (3) The new, converted, or rehabilitated multiple-unit housing must 36 provide for a minimum of fifty percent of the space for permanent 37 residential occupancy. In the case of existing occupied multifamily

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development, the multifamily housing must also provide for a minimum of four additional multifamily units. Existing multifamily vacant housing that has been vacant for twelve months or more does not have to provide additional multifamily units;

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- (4) New construction multifamily housing and rehabilitation improvements must be completed within three years from the date of approval of the application;
- (5) Property proposed to be rehabilitated must fail to comply with one or more standards of the applicable state or local building or housing codes on or after July 23, 1995. If the property proposed to be rehabilitated is not vacant, an applicant ((shall)) must provide each existing tenant housing of comparable size, quality, and price and a reasonable opportunity to relocate; and
- (6) The applicant must enter into a contract with the city or county approved by the governing authority, or an administrative official or commission authorized by the governing authority, under which the applicant has agreed to the implementation of the development on terms and conditions satisfactory to the governing authority.
- 19 **Sec. 4.** RCW 84.14.040 and 2007 c 430 s 6 are each amended to read 20 as follows:
- 21 (1) The following criteria must be met before an area may be 22 designated as a residential targeted area:
- 23 (a) The area must be within an urban center, as determined by the governing authority;
 - (b) The area must lack, as determined by the governing authority, sufficient available, desirable, and convenient residential housing, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of the public who would be likely to live in the urban center, if the affordable, desirable, attractive, and livable places to live were available; ((and))
 - (c) The providing of additional housing opportunity, including affordable housing, in the area, as determined by the governing authority, will assist in achieving one or more of the stated purposes of this chapter; and
- 34 (d) If the residential targeted area is designated by a county, the
 35 area must be located in an unincorporated area of the county that is
 36 within an urban growth area under RCW 36.70A.110 and the area must

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- include a campus of an institution of higher education, as defined in RCW 28B.92.030, where at least one thousand two hundred students live on campus during the academic year.
 - (2) For the purpose of designating a residential targeted area or areas, the governing authority may adopt a resolution of intention to so designate an area as generally described in the resolution. The resolution must state the time and place of a hearing to be held by the governing authority to consider the designation of the area and may include such other information pertaining to the designation of the area as the governing authority determines to be appropriate to apprise the public of the action intended.
 - (3) The governing authority ((shall)) must give notice of a hearing held under this chapter by publication of the notice once each week for two consecutive weeks, not less than seven days, nor more than thirty days before the date of the hearing in a paper having a general circulation in the city or county where the proposed residential targeted area is located. The notice must state the time, date, place, and purpose of the hearing and generally identify the area proposed to be designated as a residential targeted area.
 - (4) Following the hearing, or a continuance of the hearing, the governing authority may designate all or a portion of the area described in the resolution of intent as a residential targeted area if it finds, in its sole discretion, that the criteria in subsections (1) through (3) of this section have been met.
 - (5) After designation of a residential targeted area, the governing authority must adopt and implement standards and guidelines to be utilized in considering applications and making the determinations required under RCW 84.14.060. The standards and guidelines must establish basic requirements for both new construction and rehabilitation, which must include:
 - (a) Application process and procedures;
 - (b) Requirements that address demolition of existing structures and site utilization; and
 - (c) Building requirements that may include elements addressing parking, height, density, environmental impact, and compatibility with the existing surrounding property and such other amenities as will attract and keep permanent residents and that will properly enhance the

livability of the residential targeted area in which they are to be located.

- (6) The governing authority may adopt and implement, either as conditions to eight-year exemptions or as conditions to an extended exemption period under RCW 84.14.020((\(\frac{2}{2}\))) (1)(a)(ii)(B), or both, more stringent income eligibility, rent, or sale price limits, including limits that apply to a higher percentage of units, than the minimum conditions for an extended exemption period under RCW 84.14.020((\(\frac{2}{2}\))) (1)(a)(ii)(B). For any multiunit housing located in an unincorporated area of a county, a property owner seeking tax incentives under this chapter must commit to renting or selling at least twenty percent of the multifamily housing units as affordable housing units to low and moderate-income households. In the case of multiunit housing intended exclusively for owner occupancy, the minimum requirement of this subsection (6) may be satisfied solely through housing affordable to moderate-income households.
- **Sec. 5.** RCW 84.14.050 and 2007 c 430 s 7 are each amended to read 18 as follows:

An owner of property seeking tax incentives under this chapter must complete the following procedures:

- (1) In the case of rehabilitation or where demolition or new construction is required, the owner ((shall)) <u>must</u> secure from the governing authority or duly authorized representative, before commencement of rehabilitation improvements or new construction, verification of property noncompliance with applicable building and housing codes;
- (2) In the case of new and rehabilitated multifamily housing, the owner ((shall)) <u>must</u> apply to the city <u>or county</u> on forms adopted by the governing authority. The application must contain the following:
- (a) Information setting forth the grounds supporting the requested exemption including information indicated on the application form or in the guidelines;
- 33 (b) A description of the project and site plan, including the floor plan of units and other information requested;
- 35 (c) A statement that the applicant is aware of the potential tax 36 liability involved when the property ceases to be eligible for the 37 incentive provided under this chapter;

- 1 (3) The applicant must verify the application by oath or 2 affirmation; and
- 3 (4) The application must be accompanied by the application fee, if 4 any, required under RCW 84.14.080. The governing authority may permit 5 the applicant to revise an application before final action by the 6 governing authority.
- 7 **Sec. 6.** RCW 84.14.060 and 2007 c 430 s 8 and 2007 c 185 s 2 are 8 each reenacted and amended to read as follows:
 - (1) The duly authorized administrative official or committee of the city or county may approve the application if it finds that:
 - (a) A minimum of four new units are being constructed or in the case of occupied rehabilitation or conversion a minimum of four additional multifamily units are being developed;
- 14 (b) If applicable, the proposed multiunit housing project meets the affordable housing requirements as described in RCW 84.14.020;
 - (c) The proposed project is or will be, at the time of completion, in conformance with all local plans and regulations that apply at the time the application is approved;
 - (d) The owner has complied with all standards and guidelines adopted by the city or county under this chapter; and
 - (e) The site is located in a residential targeted area of an urban center that has been designated by the governing authority in accordance with procedures and guidelines indicated in RCW 84.14.040.
- (2) An application may not be approved after July 1, 2007, if any part of the proposed project site is within a campus facilities master plan, except as provided in RCW 84.14.040(1)(d).
- 27 **Sec. 7.** RCW 84.14.070 and 1995 c 375 s 10 are each amended to read 28 as follows:
- 29 (1) The governing authority or an administrative official or 30 commission authorized by the governing authority ((shall)) <u>must</u> approve 31 or deny an application filed under this chapter within ninety days 32 after receipt of the application.
- 33 (2) If the application is approved, the city ((shall)) or county
 34 must issue the owner of the property a conditional certificate of
 35 acceptance of tax exemption. The certificate must contain a statement

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by a duly authorized administrative official of the governing authority that the property has complied with the required findings indicated in RCW ((84.14.050)) 84.14.060.

- (3) If the application is denied by the authorized administrative official or commission authorized by the governing authority, the deciding administrative official or commission ((shall)) must state in writing the reasons for denial and send the notice to the applicant at the applicant's last known address within ten days of the denial.
- (4) Upon denial by a duly authorized administrative official or commission, an applicant may appeal the denial to the governing authority within thirty days after receipt of the denial. The appeal before the governing authority ((will)) must be based upon the record made before the administrative official with the burden of proof on the applicant to show that there was no substantial evidence to support the administrative official's decision. The decision of the governing body in denying or approving the application is final.
- Sec. 8. RCW 84.14.090 and 2007 c 430 s 9 are each amended to read as follows:
- (1) Upon completion of rehabilitation or new construction for which an application for a limited tax exemption under this chapter has been approved and after issuance of the certificate of occupancy, the owner ((shall)) must file with the city or county the following:
- (a) A statement of the amount of rehabilitation or construction expenditures made with respect to each housing unit and the composite expenditures made in the rehabilitation or construction of the entire property;
- (b) A description of the work that has been completed and a statement that the rehabilitation improvements or new construction on the owner's property qualify the property for limited exemption under this chapter;
- (c) If applicable, a statement that the project meets the affordable housing requirements as described in RCW 84.14.020; and
- (d) A statement that the work has been completed within three years of the issuance of the conditional certificate of tax exemption.
- (2) Within thirty days after receipt of the statements required under subsection (1) of this section, the authorized representative of the city ((shall)) or county must determine whether the work completed,

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- and the affordability of the units, is consistent with the application and the contract approved by the city <u>or county</u> and is qualified for a limited tax exemption under this chapter. The city ((shall)) <u>or county must</u> also determine which specific improvements completed meet the requirements and required findings.
- (3) If the rehabilitation, conversion, or construction is completed within three years of the date the application for a limited tax exemption is filed under this chapter, or within an authorized extension of this time limit, and the authorized representative of the city or county determines that improvements were constructed consistent with the application and other applicable requirements, including if applicable, affordable housing requirements, and the owner's property is qualified for a limited tax exemption under this chapter, the city ((shall)) or county must file the certificate of tax exemption with the county assessor within ten days of the expiration of the thirty-day period provided under subsection (2) of this section.
- (4) The authorized representative of the city ((shall)) or county \underline{must} notify the applicant that a certificate of tax exemption is not going to be filed if the authorized representative determines that:
- (a) The rehabilitation or new construction was not completed within three years of the application date, or within any authorized extension of the time limit;
- (b) The improvements were not constructed consistent with the application or other applicable requirements;
- (c) If applicable, the affordable housing requirements as described in RCW 84.14.020 were not met; or
- (d) The owner's property is otherwise not qualified for limited exemption under this chapter.
- (5) If the authorized representative of the city or county finds that construction or rehabilitation of multiple-unit housing was not completed within the required time period due to circumstances beyond the control of the owner and that the owner has been acting and could reasonably be expected to act in good faith and with due diligence, the governing authority or the city or county official authorized by the governing authority may extend the deadline for completion of construction or rehabilitation for a period not to exceed twenty-four consecutive months.

- (6) The governing authority may provide by ordinance for an appeal of a decision by the deciding officer or authority that an owner is not entitled to a certificate of tax exemption to the governing authority, a hearing examiner, or other city or county officer authorized by the governing authority to hear the appeal in accordance with such reasonable procedures and time periods as provided by ordinance of the governing authority. The owner may appeal a decision by the deciding officer or authority that is not subject to local appeal or a decision by the local appeal authority that the owner is not entitled to a certificate of tax exemption in superior court under RCW 34.05.510 through 34.05.598, if the appeal is filed within thirty days of notification by the city or county to the owner of the decision being challenged.
- **Sec. 9.** RCW 84.14.100 and 2007 c 430 s 10 are each amended to read 15 as follows:

- (1) Thirty days after the anniversary of the date of the certificate of tax exemption and each year for the tax exemption period, the owner of the rehabilitated or newly constructed property ((shall)) must file with a designated authorized representative of the city or county an annual report indicating the following:
- (a) A statement of occupancy and vacancy of the rehabilitated or newly constructed property during the twelve months ending with the anniversary date;
- (b) A certification by the owner that the property has not changed use and, if applicable, that the property has been in compliance with the affordable housing requirements as described in RCW 84.14.020 since the date of the certificate approved by the city or county;
- (c) A description of changes or improvements constructed after issuance of the certificate of tax exemption; and
- (d) Any additional information requested by the city <u>or county</u> in regards to the units receiving a tax exemption.
- (2) All cities <u>or counties</u>, which issue certificates of tax exemption for multiunit housing that conform to the requirements of this chapter, ((shall)) <u>must</u> report annually by December 31st of each year, beginning in 2007, to the department of ((community, trade, and economic development)) <u>commerce</u>. The report must include the following information:

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- 1 (a) The number of tax exemption certificates granted;
 - (b) The total number and type of units produced or to be produced;
- 3 (c) The number and type of units produced or to be produced meeting 4 affordable housing requirements;
 - (d) The actual development cost of each unit produced;
- 6 (e) The total monthly rent or total sale amount of each unit 7 produced;
 - (f) The income of each renter household at the time of initial occupancy and the income of each initial purchaser of owner-occupied units at the time of purchase for each of the units receiving a tax exemption and a summary of these figures for the city or county; and
- 12 (g) The value of the tax exemption for each project receiving a tax 13 exemption and the total value of tax exemptions granted.
- 14 **Sec. 10.** RCW 84.14.110 and 2007 c 430 s 11 are each amended to read as follows:
 - (1) If improvements have been exempted under this chapter, the improvements continue to be exempted for the applicable period under RCW 84.14.020, so long as they are not converted to another use and continue to satisfy all applicable conditions. If the owner intends to convert the multifamily development to another use, or if applicable, if the owner intends to discontinue compliance with the affordable housing requirements as described in RCW 84.14.020 or any other condition to exemption, the owner ((shall)) must notify the assessor within sixty days of the change in use or intended discontinuance. If, after a certificate of tax exemption has been filed with the county assessor, the authorized representative of the governing authority discovers that a portion of the property is changed or will be changed to a use that is other than residential or that housing or amenities no longer meet the requirements, including, if applicable, affordable housing requirements, as previously approved or agreed upon by contract between the city or county and the owner and that the multifamily housing, or a portion of the housing, no longer qualifies for the exemption, the tax exemption must be canceled and the following must occur:
- 35 (a) Additional real property tax must be imposed upon the value of 36 the nonqualifying improvements in the amount that would normally be 37 imposed, plus a penalty must be imposed amounting to twenty percent.

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This additional tax is calculated based upon the difference between the property tax paid and the property tax that would have been paid if it had included the value of the nonqualifying improvements dated back to the date that the improvements were converted to a nonmultifamily use;

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- (b) The tax must include interest upon the amounts of the additional tax at the same statutory rate charged on delinquent property taxes from the dates on which the additional tax could have been paid without penalty if the improvements had been assessed at a value without regard to this chapter; and
- (c) The additional tax owed together with interest and penalty must become a lien on the land and attach at the time the property or portion of the property is removed from multifamily use or the amenities no longer meet applicable requirements, and has priority to and must be fully paid and satisfied before a recognizance, mortgage, judgment, debt, obligation, or responsibility to or with which the land may become charged or liable. The lien may be foreclosed upon expiration of the same period after delinquency and in the same manner provided by law for foreclosure of liens for delinquent real property taxes. An additional tax unpaid on its due date is delinquent. From the date of delinquency until paid, interest must be charged at the same rate applied by law to delinquent ad valorem property taxes.
- (2) Upon a determination that a tax exemption is to be canceled for a reason stated in this section, the governing authority or authorized representative ((shall)) must notify the record owner of the property as shown by the tax rolls by mail, return receipt requested, of the determination to cancel the exemption. The owner may appeal the determination to the governing authority or authorized representative, within thirty days by filing a notice of appeal with the clerk of the governing authority, which notice must specify the factual and legal basis on which the determination of cancellation is alleged to be The governing authority or a hearing examiner or other official authorized by the governing authority may hear the appeal. the hearing, all affected parties may be heard and all competent evidence received. After the hearing, the deciding body or officer ((shall)) must either affirm, modify, or repeal the decision of cancellation of exemption based on the evidence received. An aggrieved party may appeal the decision of the deciding body or officer to the superior court under RCW 34.05.510 through 34.05.598.

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(3) Upon determination by the governing authority or authorized 1 2 representative to terminate an exemption, the county officials having possession of the assessment and tax rolls ((shall)) must correct the 3 rolls in the manner provided for omitted property under RCW 84.40.080. 4 The county assessor ((shall)) must make such a valuation of the 5 property and improvements as is necessary to permit the correction of 6 the rolls. The value of the new housing construction, conversion, and 7 rehabilitation improvements added to the rolls $((\frac{\text{shall}}{\text{be}}))$ is 8 considered as new construction for the purposes of chapter 84.55 RCW. 9 The owner may appeal the valuation to the county board of equalization 10 under chapter 84.48 RCW and according to the provisions of RCW 11 84.40.038. If there has been a failure to comply with this chapter, 12 13 the property must be listed as an omitted assessment for assessment 14 years beginning January 1 of the calendar year in which the noncompliance first occurred, but the listing as an omitted assessment 15 may not be for a period more than three calendar years preceding the 16 17 year in which the failure to comply was discovered.

> Passed by the Senate March 8, 2012. Passed by the House March 8, 2012. Approved by the Governor March 29, 2012. Filed in Office of Secretary of State March 29, 2012.