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**HOUSE BILL 1267**

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**State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session**

**By** Representatives Tharinger, Steele, and Ramel

AN ACT Relating to rural public facilities sales and use tax; and amending RCW 82.14.370.

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

**Sec.**  RCW 82.14.370 and 2022 c 175 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) The legislative authority of a rural county may impose a sales and use tax in accordance with the terms of this chapter. The tax is in addition to other taxes authorized by law and must be collected from those persons who are taxable by the state under chapters 82.08 and 82.12 RCW upon the occurrence of any taxable event within the county. The rate of tax may not exceed 0.09 percent of the selling price in the case of a sales tax or value of the article used in the case of a use tax, except that for rural counties with population densities between 60 and 100 persons per square mile, the rate shall not exceed 0.04 percent before January 1, 2000.

(2) The tax imposed under subsection (1) of this section must be deducted from the amount of tax otherwise required to be collected or paid over to the department of revenue under chapter 82.08 or 82.12 RCW. The department of revenue must perform the collection of such taxes on behalf of the county at no cost to the county.

(3)(a) Moneys collected under this section may only be used to finance public facilities serving economic development purposes in rural counties and finance personnel in economic development offices. The public facility must be listed as an item in the officially adopted county overall economic development plan, or the economic development section of the county's comprehensive plan, or the comprehensive plan of a city or town located within the county for those counties planning under RCW 36.70A.040, or provide affordable workforce housing infrastructure or facilities. For those counties that do not have an adopted overall economic development plan and do not plan under the growth management act, the public facility must be listed in the county's capital facilities plan or the capital facilities plan of a city or town located within the county, or provide affordable workforce housing infrastructure or facilities.

(b) In implementing this section, the county must consult with cities, towns, and port districts located within the county and the associate development organization serving the county to ensure that the expenditure meets the goals of chapter 130, Laws of 2004 and the requirements of (a) of this subsection. Each county collecting money under this section must report((~~, as follows,~~)) the following to the office of the state auditor((~~,~~)) within 150 days after the close of each fiscal year: (i) A list of new projects begun during the fiscal year, showing that the county has used the funds for those projects consistent with the goals of chapter 130, Laws of 2004 and the requirements of (a) of this subsection; and (ii) expenditures during the fiscal year on projects begun in a previous year. Any projects financed prior to June 10, 2004, from the proceeds of obligations to which the tax imposed under subsection (1) of this section has been pledged may not be deemed to be new projects under this subsection. No new projects funded with money collected under this section may be for justice system facilities.

(c) The definitions in this section apply throughout this section.

(i) "Public facilities" means bridges, roads, domestic and industrial water facilities, sanitary sewer facilities, earth stabilization, storm sewer facilities, railroads, electrical facilities, natural gas facilities, research, testing, training, and incubation facilities in innovation partnership zones designated under RCW 43.330.270, buildings, structures, telecommunications infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, or commercial infrastructure, port facilities in the state of Washington, or affordable workforce housing infrastructure or facilities.

(ii) "Economic development purposes" means those purposes which facilitate the creation or retention of businesses and jobs in a county, including affordable workforce housing infrastructure or facilities.

(iii) "Economic development office" means an office of a county, port districts, or an associate development organization as defined in RCW 43.330.010, which promotes economic development purposes within the county.

(iv) "Affordable workforce housing infrastructure or facilities" means housing infrastructure or facilities that a qualifying provider uses for housing for a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose income is no more than 120 percent of the median income, adjusted for housing size, for the county where the housing is located.

(v) "Qualifying provider" means a nonprofit entity as defined in RCW 84.36.560, a nonprofit entity or qualified cooperative association as defined in RCW 84.36.049, a housing authority created under RCW 35.82.030 or 35.82.300, a public corporation established under RCW 35.21.660 or 35.21.730, or a county or municipal corporation.

(4) No tax may be collected under this section before July 1, 1998.

(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, no tax may be collected under this section by a county more than 25 years after the date that a tax is first imposed under this section.

(b) For counties imposing the tax at the rate of 0.09 percent before August 1, 2009, and meeting the definition of a rural county as of August 1, 2009, the tax expires ((~~on the date that is 25 years after the date that the 0.09 percent tax rate was first imposed by that county~~)) December 31, 2054.

(5) By December 31, 2025, the state auditor must provide a publicly accessible searchable system on its website containing the project information and other expenditure information included in the annual report required under subsection (3)(b) of this section for each county. The searchable system must also include the total amount of revenue collected by the county under this section in the prior fiscal year. This subsection applies to reports filed in 2025 and thereafter.

(6) For purposes of this section, "rural county" means a county with a population density of less than 100 persons per square mile or a county smaller than 225 square miles as determined by the office of financial management ((~~and published each year by the department for the period July 1st to June 30th~~)) pursuant to RCW 43.62.035.

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