# Sales Tax Legislation

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Assembly Bill 68 (Montanez) Chapter 128
Car Buyer’s Bill of Rights

Effective January 1, 2006, but operative July 1, 2006. Among its provisions, adds Section 6012.3 to the Revenue and Taxation Code, and Section 11713.21 to the Vehicle Code.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill enacts the Car Buyer’s Bill of Rights to, among other things, require a car dealer selling a used vehicle for a purchase price of under $40,000, to offer a 2-day contract cancellation option agreement, with a sliding scale for the cost of the option, depending on the purchase price of the used vehicle. For sales tax purposes, the contract cancellation option is not part of taxable gross receipts.

Sponsor: Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

The Sales and Use Tax Law imposes a sales or a use tax on the gross receipts from the sale of, and on the sales price of, tangible personal property, unless specifically exempted or excluded by statute. Sections 6011 and 6012 of the Sales and Use Tax Law, define “sales price” and “gross receipts” as the total amount of the sale, lease or rental price, without any deduction on account of the cost of materials used, labor or service costs, interest charged, losses, or any other expenses related to the sale of the property. However, the law expressly excludes from the definition of “gross receipts” and “sales price” property that is returned by the customer when the entire amount is refunded either in cash or credit. A refund or credit of the entire amount is deemed to be given when the purchase price and sales tax, less rehandling and restocking costs, if any, are refunded or credited to the customer. Therefore, unless the entire purchase price is returned to the customer, the entire amount of sales tax is due on the original sales price.

Regulation 1655, Returns, Defects and Replacements, interprets and makes specific the laws governing returned merchandise. Regulation 1655 specifies the conditions that must be met to claim a deduction for returned merchandise. Those requirements are:

- The original sale must have been reported as part of total taxable sales.
- The full sales price, including sales tax, has been refunded either in cash or credit.
- The customer in order to obtain the refund or credit was not required to purchase other property at a price greater than the amount charged for the property returned.
A refund or credit of the entire amount is deemed to be given when the purchase price and sales tax, less rehandling and restocking costs, are refunded or credited to the customer. The amount withheld for rehandling and restocking may not exceed the actual cost of rehandling and restocking the returned merchandise. However, in lieu of using the actual cost for each transaction, the amount withheld for rehandling and restocking may be a percentage of the sales price determined by the average cost of rehandling and restocking returned merchandise during the previous accounting cycle (generally one year).

AMENDMENT

Among its provisions, this bill enacts the Car Buyer’s Bill of Rights. Among other things, this bill adds Section 11713.21 to the Vehicle Code to require a car dealer to offer a 2-day contract cancellation option agreement on used vehicles with a purchase price of less than $40,000, and allows the purchaser to return the used vehicle without cause, provided that specified conditions are met. The contract cancellation option applies only to used vehicles sold for personal, family, or household use. The contract cancellation option does not apply to a motorcycle, as defined in Section 400 of the Vehicle Code, an off-highway vehicle as identified in Section 38010 of the Vehicle Code, or a recreational vehicle as defined in Section 18010 of the Health and Safety Code. The purchase price for the contract cancellation option agreement will be:

$75 for a vehicle with a cash price of $5,000 or less;
$150 for a vehicle with a cash price of more than $5,000, but not more than $10,000;
$250 for a vehicle with a cash price of more than $10,000, but not more than $30,000; and

One percent of the purchase price for a vehicle with a cash price of more than $30,000, but not more than $40,000.

The term “cash price” has the same meaning as defined in Section 2982 (a)(1)(A) of the Civil Code. “Cash price” means the amount for which the seller would sell and transfer to the buyer unqualified title to the vehicle and would include the cash price of accessories or services related to the sale, including delivery, installation, alterations, modifications, and improvements. “Cash price” excludes document preparation fees, taxes imposed on the sale, pollution control certification fees, business partnership automation fees, prior credit or lease balance on property being traded in, service contract charges, theft deterrent charges, surface protection product charges, optional debt cancellation option agreement charges, contract cancellation option agreement charges. The bill also provides that “cash price” excludes registration, transfer, titling, license, and California tire and optional business partnership automation fees.

Among other things, the contract cancellation option agreement is required to include the following information:

A statement specifying the time within which the buyer must exercise the right to cancel the purchase and return the vehicle to the dealer. The time period specified
in the contract shall not be earlier than two days from the day on which the dealer delivers the vehicle to the buyer.

A statement specifying the dollar amount of any restocking fee the buyer must pay to the dealer to exercise the right to cancel the purchase under the contract cancellation option agreement. The restocking fee would not exceed: $175 for a vehicle with a cash price of $5,000 or less, $350 for a vehicle with a cash price of less than $10,000, and $500 for a vehicle with a cash price of $10,000 or more. The dealer must apply toward the restocking fee the price paid by the buyer for the contract cancellation option. For example, if a vehicle had a cash price of $5,000, the applicable restocking fee would be $175, less $75 for the contract cancellation option, resulting in a net amount of $100 that the buyer must pay the dealer.

A statement specifying the maximum number of miles that the vehicle may be driven during the specified time period in order for the buyer to remain eligible for cancellation under the contract cancellation option agreement. A dealer will not specify fewer than 250 miles in the contract cancellation option agreement.

A statement that the right to cancel will apply only if, within the time period specified in the contract (i.e., minimum of a 2-day period), the buyer provides the dealer with the following:

- a written notice exercising the right to cancel the purchase signed by the buyer;
- any restocking fee specified in the contract cancellation option agreement minus the purchase price for the contract cancellation option;
- the original contract cancellation option agreement and vehicle purchase contract and related documents, if the seller gave such documents to the buyer;
- all original vehicle titling and registration documents, if the seller gave such documents to the buyer;
- the vehicle which must be returned in the same condition as when it was delivered by the dealer to the buyer, excluding reasonable wear and tear, and ;
- the vehicle must not have been driven beyond the mileage limit specified in the contract cancellation agreement (i.e., dealer must allow at least 250 miles).

A provision specifying that no later than the second day following the day on which the buyer exercises the right to cancel the purchase in accordance with the contract cancellation option agreement, the dealer will cancel the contract and make a full refund, including that portion of the sales tax attributable to amounts excluded pursuant to Section 6012.3 of the Sales and Use Tax Law. The full refund will include any vehicle the buyer left with the dealer as downpayment or trade-in.

This bill also adds Section 6012.3 to the Sales and Use Tax Law to provide that “gross receipts” and “sales price” do not include that portion of the sales price returned to the buyer of a used vehicle or the purchase price of the contract cancellation option agreement, pursuant to Section 11713.21 of the Vehicle Code.

This bill becomes operative July 1, 2006.
BACKGROUND

Current law requires motor vehicle dealers to make certain disclosures to buyers, including that California law does not provide for a “cooling off” period or other cancellation period for vehicle sales. Under the California Lemon Law (Civil Code section 1793.2), a manufacturer is required to provide restitution or a replacement to the buyer of a new vehicle when the vehicle is a “lemon.”

Some vehicle dealers are already providing buyers with a right-to-return period. General Motors offers a 3-day or 150 mile “Satisfaction Guarantee” on their GM Certified used vehicles. CarMax offers a 5-day Money-Back Guarantee with every purchase of a used car or truck. Rydell’s Automotive Group in San Fernando Valley also provides a 7-day return policy.

Last year, the author of this bill introduced an identical bill, AB 1839. Supporters of AB 1839 argued that the 3-day cooling off period would alleviate many of the problems associated with used car sales, such as misrepresentations regarding the vehicle’s condition and being charged a price in excess of a fair market price. Opponents argued that the cooling off period represented an unwarranted intrusion into private contracts and that the reimbursement amounts would not adequately compensate the dealer for the costs of unwinding a transaction (i.e., paperwork, cancellation of financing arrangements, and inspection and/or reconditioning of the vehicle).

Though the 3-day cooling off period was amended out of the bill before being sent to the Governor, he vetoed the bill. The Governor’s veto message states, in part:

“The terms contained in the bill need to be further addressed and refined. If the goal is consumer protection, then there needs to be a level playing field with standards and terms based on objectivity and clarity, which will provide true benefit to the consumer.

My concerns with this bill include the vague definitions of certified used cars, qualified technician and the new definitions it places into law of sellers and dealers. These terms will likely cause the Department of Motor Vehicles to be involved in costly investigations over unenforceable and conflicting definitions.”

COMMENTS

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this bill to provide a collection of consumer protections with respect to sales of motor vehicles.

2. **Key amendments.** The June 30, 2005 amendments do the following: (1) specify that a 2-day contract cancellation option agreement does not apply to purchases of off-highway vehicles; and, (2) make technical, nonsubstantive changes to the bill. The June 21, 2005 amendments do the following: (1) specify that a 2-day contract cancellation option agreement does not apply to
purchases of motorcycles; and (2) add coauthors. The June 9, 2005 amendments do the following: (1) require a car dealer to offer a 2-day, rather than a 3-day, contract cancellation option, and a sliding scale for the cost of the option, depending on the cash price of the vehicle; and (2) specify that the restocking fee will not exceed $175 for a vehicle with a cash price of $5,000 or less, $350 for a vehicle with a cash price of less than $10,000, and $500 for a vehicle with a cash price of $10,000 or more; and (3) provide that the 2-day contract cancellation option does not apply to recreational vehicles, as defined. The May 26, 2005 amendments make technical, nonsubstantive changes to the bill, including the renumbering of certain subdivisions that had been incorrectly numbered. The May 5, 2005 amendments do the following: (1) require a car dealer to offer a 3-day contract cancellation option on used vehicles with a purchase price of under $40,000; (2) provide that the contract cancellation option agreement cannot exceed $250, and would allow a purchaser of a used vehicle to return the vehicle within the 3-day period without cause, as specified; (3) provide that the $250 charge for the contract cancellation option agreement is not part of taxable gross receipts; (4) specify that the restocking fee will not exceed $350 for vehicles with a purchase price of $10,000 and $500 for vehicles with a purchase price of $10,000 or more; and (5) add an operative date of July 1, 2006.

3. Charge for contract cancellation option agreement and restocking fee. This bill adds Section 6012.3 to the Sales and Use Tax Law to provide that “gross receipts” and “sales price” do not include that portion of the sales price returned to the buyer of a used motor vehicle or the purchase price for the purchase of a contract cancellation option agreement. The restocking fee would be: $175 if the vehicle’s cash price is $5,000 or less, $350 if the vehicle’s cash price is less than $10,000, $500 if the vehicle’s cash price is $10,000 or more. The dealer is required to reduce the restocking fee by the charge for the contract cancellation option agreement (e.g., if the vehicle’s cash price is $5,000, the restocking fee would be $175 less $75 for the contract cancellation option for a net amount of $100 paid by the buyer to the dealer).

As previously stated, Section 6012.3 provides that “gross receipts” does not include the purchase price for the purchase of a contract cancellation option. Therefore, the purchase price for the contract cancellation option agreement is not part of gross receipts and is not subject to tax.

Regarding the restocking fees, in general, these fees are not included in gross receipts if the restocking fee does not exceed the actual cost to restock the returned item. However, if the restocking fee exceeds the actual costs of restocking the returned item, than any excess amount would be part of gross receipts and subject to tax.
Assembly Bill 139 (Committee on Budget) Chapter 74
Electronic Funds Transfers


BILL SUMMARY

This budget trailer bill, among other things unrelated to the Board, requires taxpayers whose average monthly sales and use tax liabilities average $10,000 or more, to remit their tax payments electronically.

Sponsor: Assembly Budget Committee

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

Under existing law, Section 6479.3 of the Revenue and Taxation Code provides the statutory authority to require taxpayers with monthly tax liabilities averaging $20,000 or more to remit their tax payments via an electronic funds transfer (EFT). Under the law, taxpayers that meet the $20,000 threshold, are required to remit those funds under procedures prescribed by the Board. A person’s failure to remit the funds under those procedures are subject to specified penalties.

AMENDMENT

This bill amends Section 6479.3 to require taxpayers with sales and use tax liabilities averaging $10,000 or more per month to remit their tax payments via an EFT under procedures prescribed by the Board.

The bill became effective the day of enactment, July 19, 2005.

BACKGROUND

Section 6479.3 was added to the Sales and Use Tax Law in 1991 (SB 467, Ch. 473) in order to provide a faster, more secure way of transferring funds and to also enable the Board to identify and start delinquent tax collection efforts earlier. Prior to the enactment of SB 467, tax payments were submitted by mail. SB 467 initially required only those taxpayers whose average monthly tax liabilities were $50,000 or more to remit by EFT. Additional provisions incorporated in SB 467 provided that, after two years (beginning January 1, 1995), those taxpayers whose monthly tax liabilities averaged $20,000 or more were additionally required to remit by EFT. This threshold has remained at $20,000 since January 1, 1995.
COMMENTS

1. **Purpose.** This budget trailer bill is intended to, in part, implement the 2005-06 Budget agreement regarding the operations of state government.

2. **AB 1765 chaptered out these provisions.** AB 1765 was a Board-sponsored measure to also amend Section 6479.3. Under this statute, aside from the mandatory requirements for certain taxpayers to remit their payments via EFT, additional provisions are contained in the statute to allow other taxpayers to voluntary remit by EFT if they desired to do so. However, the law requires those who voluntarily opt to remit by EFT to continue to remit via EFT for a minimum of one year. The Board sponsored AB 1765 to delete the one-year minimum provision. The Board believes the one-year minimum requirement is no longer necessary, and could actually serve as a disincentive to sign up. Since AB 1765 was signed, the changes to Section 6479.3 enacted by this measure are chaptered out.

3. **The bill became effective immediately.** The language of Section 6479.3 provides that the taxpayers who meet the $10,000 threshold are required to remit the amounts due by an EFT under procedures prescribed by the Board. Since the bill became effective on July 19, 2005, the Board had already begun developing procedures to accommodate the new taxpayer base and we anticipate that the procedures would be in place no later than January 1, 2006. Therefore, the new EFT taxpayers will make their first payment via EFT by January 31, 2006. This payment will represent the liability for the 4th Quarter 2005 reporting period, which is due on or before January 31, 2006.

4. **Operative date before January 1, 2006 would have placed a burden on taxpayers.** Board staff reviews taxpayer accounts each year and notifies taxpayers when they are required to pay by EFT. A packet is mailed to the taxpayer which includes a letter notifying the taxpayer of their requirement to pay taxes by EFT, instructions on EFT debit and credit payment methods, the Board’s Publication 80, *Electronic Funds Transfer Information Guide – Sales and Use Taxes*, and the Board’s Form BOE-555-EFT, *Authorization Agreement For Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)*, including instructions on how to complete the authorization form, and a return envelope. The packet provides information on the payment methods, registration, filing tax returns, due dates, and more. To register for the EFT program, the taxpayer must do the following:

- Read the letter of instruction for procedures and due dates;
- Read the EFT Credit and Debit Instructions to determine which payment method they would prefer to use (i.e., Automated Clearing House (ACH) credit or debit method);
- Read Publication 80, *Electronic Funds Transfer Information Guide*, for additional instructions on registering, making payments, and filing returns;
- If the taxpayer selects the ACH Debit method, the taxpayer must contact the State’s data collection service and provide them with payment
The taxpayer can contact the data collection service by telephone (toll-free), PC software and modem, or over the Internet;

- If the taxpayer selects the ACH Credit method, the taxpayer must contact his or her financial institution directly and instruct them to transfer the payment to the Board’s bank account. The taxpayer’s financial institution may require forms to be completed to initiate the payment process;
- Complete BOE-555-EFT, Authorization Agreement for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), and mail the authorization agreement to the Board in the enclosed return envelope. Taxpayers who select the ACH Debit method must include a voided check with the authorization form.

For many taxpayers, registering for the EFT program and understanding the steps involved to make that first EFT payment can be confusing. It can be very time-consuming reading through the materials and taxpayers often call the Board’s EFT Help line with questions on registering and making payments. Consequently, adequate lead time is essential to having a successful electronic payment program.

5. Operative date of January 1, 2006 is a reasonable timeframe. The Board's current timeline for notifying and processing taxpayers EFT authorization forms is about six months. In June of each year, the Board reviews accounts to determine those accounts required to pay by EFT and those accounts that can be removed from the EFT program. The first notification letters are mailed to taxpayers on September 15th, and include all of the Board materials that are mentioned under Comment 4. Taxpayers are instructed to return the authorization form within 15 days. However, since approximately two-thirds of taxpayers do not respond to the first notification letter, a follow-up letter, including Board materials, is mailed to taxpayers on November 15th.

When the Board receives the authorization form, it reviews the form for accuracy. If the form was not completed properly, the Board contacts the taxpayer to verify the correct information. In some cases, a new form must be completed by the taxpayer. For example, if a taxpayer requests to pay by ACH debit method, but signs on the signature line for ACH credit method, a new form must be completed and returned to the Board.

Once the authorization form has been verified, the Board sends a confirmation letter with the taxpayer's EFT start date. If the taxpayer selected the ACH debit method, the Board provides the taxpayer with a temporary security code. The taxpayer then needs to contact the data collection service to create a permanent security code before the reporting of the first payment.

Additionally, the Board conducts a “prenote” (prenotification) test on ACH debit payments to validate the taxpayer’s bank account number. This test uses a zero-dollar amount and is made at least ten days prior to origination of the first ACH debit payment. Since the taxpayer does not provide a bank account for ACH credit payments, the Board does not perform a prenote test on these payments.
transactions. However, the Board advises taxpayers who select the ACH credit method to conduct a prenote test to validate the Board’s routing number and bank account number.

After all information is verified and tests have been conducted, the banking information is key-entered twice into the Board’s computer system to ensure the accuracy of the data.

While the EFT method has proven to be an efficient method of payment, many taxpayers initially experience problems in registering and in making their first payments. Taxpayers are resistant to change and initially find the payment method confusing to use. Board staff usually experiences numerous phone calls in answering taxpayer questions. For these reasons, it is important to have an adequate timeline that will allow the Board to register several thousand new accounts, in addition to assisting and educating taxpayers on this new payment method.
Assembly Bill 451 (Yee) Chapter 391
Local Tax Allocation – Jet Fuel Sales


BILL SUMMARY

This bill, operative January 1, 2008, modifies the way the 1 percent Bradley-Burns Uniform local tax is allocated on sales of jet fuel, so that the place of sale for sales of jet fuel would be the place in which the fuel is delivered into the aircraft, regardless if the retailer has only one or more than one place of business in this state, or whether the sales are negotiated in this state, except as specified.

Sponsor: City and County of San Francisco

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

Under existing law, the Board administers the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law which authorizes counties to impose a local sales and use tax of 1 percent on tangible personal property sold at retail in the county, or purchased outside the county for use in the county. All counties within California have adopted ordinances under the terms of the Bradley-Burns Law and levy the 1 percent local tax.

Under current law, cities are authorized to impose a sales and use tax rate of up to 3/4 percent. The city sales and use tax rate is credited against the county rate so that the combined rate does not exceed 1 percent. (Most cities’ ordinances provide for a city tax rate equaling 3/4 percent; however, there are several cities that have ordinances providing for a small fraction less than 3/4 percent).

Of the 1 percent Bradley-Burns local tax rate, the 1/4 percent portion is allocated to the county in which the sale or use of the property occurred for purposes of funding county transportation projects.

Section 7205 of this Bradley-Burns law specifies the “place of sale” for purposes of the local sales tax. Under this section, in general, all retail sales in California are consummated at the place of business of the retailer. If a retailer has only one place of business in California, the local sales tax derived from sales consummated at that place of business is transmitted by the Board to the city, county, or city and county in which the retailer’s place of business is located. If title to the property sold passes to the purchaser in California, it is immaterial that title passes to the purchaser at a place outside the city, county, or city and county in which the
retailer’s place of business is located, or that the property sold is never within the city, county, or city and county in which the retailer’s place of business is located. Therefore, if a jet fuel dealer in California has only one place of business, and that place of business is at an airport, under current law, the local tax derived from the sale of jet fuel by that dealer would be transmitted to the city, county, or city and county in which the airport is located. If that place of business is somewhere other than an airport, the local tax derived from the sale of jet fuel would be transmitted to the city, county, or city and county in which the dealer’s place of business is located, regardless of the fact that the purchaser takes title to the fuel at an airport.

If a jet fuel retailer has more than one place of business in the State, the place or places at which the retail sales are consummated for purposes of allocating the local tax is generally the local jurisdiction in which the jet fuel is delivered into the aircraft. The law contains specific provisions with respect to the allocation of local tax on sales of jet fuel delivered to aircraft at San Francisco and Ontario international airports and at airports that are located in a different local jurisdiction than the jurisdiction that owns or operates the airport – referred to as “multijurisdictional airports” in the law. For jet fuel sales at the San Francisco airport, the tax is split evenly between the city and county of San Francisco and the county of San Mateo. For Ontario, the city of Ontario receives the tax at the city-imposed rate of 3/4 percent, and the County of San Bernardino receives ¼ percent.

If a jet fuel retailer negotiates its sales outside California, local tax is allocated as follows:

1. Generally, the local tax is allocated through the countywide pools depending on the counties in which the fuel is delivered into the aircraft. Each jurisdiction within the county receives a proportionate share of that revenue, based on its proportionate share of the total local tax allocated to that jurisdiction.

2. If the oil company has no other activities or locations in this state, and if it has a stock of goods, the local tax would be allocated to the city or county where the stocks of goods are located.

For multijurisdictional airports, the tax is split between the jurisdiction in which the airport is located and the jurisdiction that owns or operates the airport, as further specified in law.

AMENDMENT

This bill amends Sections 7204.03 and 7205 of the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law, operative January 1, 2008, to specify that, for purposes of allocating the local sales and use tax on sales of jet fuel, the place at which the retail sale of that jet fuel is consummated for purposes of allocating that local tax is the point of delivery of the fuel into the aircraft, except as specified.

BACKGROUND

Up until July 29, 1991, sales of fuel and petroleum products to aircraft common carriers were exempt from 80 percent of the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Tax when
the fuel was used outside the county in which the sale was made. This exemption had traced back to the days when the local tax rates were not uniform. At that time, the common carriers and public utilities contended that the various local tax rates produced competitive disadvantages and disruptions of trade because of the varying rates among local jurisdictions. This exemption was repealed by SB 180 (Stats. 1991, Ch. 236) as part of the budget compromise.

With respect to jet fuel transactions, airlines generally negotiate their purchases at the headquarters of the fuel supplier. Usually, airlines offer a bid with the oil companies. When a bid is awarded, the contract is generally executed at the headquarters of the oil company. Thus, prior to the enactment of AB 66 (Stats. 1998, Ch. 1027) the local tax was allocated to the taxing jurisdiction in which those negotiations occurred.

After the partial local tax jet fuel exemption was repealed in 1991, but before AB 66 became law, one jet fuel vendor began erroneously allocating the local tax on its sales of jet fuel to the location of the tank farms located at each airport. In most cases, the tank farms and airports are located in the same local jurisdiction. However, at the San Francisco International Airport, the airport itself (where the fuel is delivered into the aircraft) is located in an unincorporated area of San Mateo County, and the tank farms are located in the City of South San Francisco. The vendor was erroneously allocating the tax to the jurisdiction where they believed the tanks were located - the County of San Mateo. A local tax consultant filed a request for reallocation for the local tax, claiming that the local tax should be allocated to the City of South San Francisco, since that is the jurisdiction where the tanks are located. When the Board reviewed the local tax consultant’s claim, the Board concluded that, in fact, the tax should have actually been allocated to the jurisdiction in which the principal negotiations took place - the City and County of San Francisco. The Board then reallocated the local tax in accordance with the law.

Consequently, AB 66 was enacted to amend the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law to modify the allocation of the local tax on sales of jet fuel by retailers having more than one place of business in California and where the principal negotiations for those sales occur in California. In essence, the local tax is generally allocated to the local jurisdiction in which the jet fuel is delivered into the aircraft, with the exceptions described in the previous paragraphs.

A similar local tax allocation measure was considered in the 2004 session, AB 2466 (Yee, as amended August 23, 2004). The bill passed the Legislature, but was vetoed by the Governor. The Governor’s veto message stated, “The policy issue contained in this bill, while important, does not require waving an opportunity for the public to be involved in the process. Recognizing the importance of a policy discussion on this issue, this bill requires that the State Auditor conduct an audit to examine certain aspects of the state sales and use tax system. The report issued by the State Auditor should be part of the discussion before enacting new changes in the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law. I would encourage the Legislature to revisit this issue next session.”
1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this bill is to ensure that local governments that host airports receive the benefit of sales tax on jet fuel sales, as envisioned by the Legislature when it passed AB 66 in 1998. AB 451 is intended to close the loophole and restore the Legislature’s intent when it passed AB 66.

2. **Key amendments.** The **August 17, 2005 amendments** deleted the requirement that the Legislative Analyst’s Office conduct a study and prepare a report on or before October 1, 2006 on the state sales and use tax system. The **June 27, 2005 amendments** incorporated the provisions that require the LAO to conduct a study and prepare a report. The amendments, in addition, delayed the operative date with respect to the changes to the allocation of local tax on specified jet fuel transactions, to January 1, 2008.

3. **What do these allocation changes do?** Operative January 1, 2008, the bill only changes the way local tax on jet fuel sales is currently allocated with respect to sales of jet fuel where the principal negotiations for the sale occur outside California, and with respect to sales by retailers with only one place of business. With these changes, regardless of whether a retailer negotiates the sale in-state or out-of-state, or whether a retailer has only one business location, or multiple, the local tax will be allocated to the place in which the fuel is delivered into the aircraft. The exceptions for multijurisdictional airports, San Francisco and Ontario would remain in law, however.

4. **These amendments will to a small degree impact some fixed base operators’ local tax allocation.** There are over 100 airports in California that sell jet fuel. At many of these airports, purchasers of jet fuel maintain a fuel purchasing account with fixed base operators operating out of the airport. If any of these fixed base operators who have only one place of business in California negotiate these sales in a jurisdiction outside the jurisdiction in which the airport is located, the local tax allocations on these transactions would shift – from the jurisdiction where the negotiations took place to the jurisdiction where the airport is located. We do not expect a significant number of fixed base operators to fall into this category.

5. **Bill will not be problematic to administer.** Enactment of this measure will not materially increase the Board’s workload, as enactment of this measure does not appear to affect a significant number of jet fuel providers.

6. **Related legislation.** A similar jet fuel local tax allocation measure, AB 1282 (Mullin & Ruskin), would have deleted the provisions related to “multijurisdictional airports” and would have provided that the place of sale for all jet fuel sales is the point of delivery of the fuel into the aircraft whether or not the retailer has more than one place of business in this state, and whether or not the sales are negotiated inside or outside California. This measure died in the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee.
Assembly Bill 671 (Klehs) Chapter 308
Voluntary Use Tax Reporting

Effective January 1, 2006. Amends Section 6487.06 of, and adds and repeals Section 18511 of, the Revenue and Taxation Code,

BILL SUMMARY

This bill:

- Extends for an additional two years, the provision that allows qualifying purchasers to voluntarily register with the Board and pay their past-due use tax liabilities in exchange for a reduction in the number of years of past-due liabilities for which they will be held responsible;

- Requires the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) to revise information accompanying the personal income tax and corporation tax returns to include information about taxpayers’ obligation to report use tax.

Sponsor: Assembly Member Johan Klehs

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

Under the existing Use Tax Law, Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 6201) of Part 1 of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, a use tax is imposed on the storage, use, or other consumption in this state of tangible personal property purchased from any retailer. The use tax is imposed on the purchaser, and unless that purchaser pays the use tax to a retailer registered to collect the California use tax, the purchaser is liable for the tax, unless the use of that property is specifically exempted or excluded from tax. The use tax is the same rate as the sales tax and is required to be remitted to the Board on or before the last day of the month following the quarterly period in which the purchase was made, or to the FTB via the income tax return. A use tax liability is primarily a result of a California consumer or business making a purchase of an item for their own use from an out-of-state retailer that is not registered with the Board to collect the use tax.

Effective January 1, 2004, Assembly Bill 1741 (Stats. 2003, Ch. 697), added authority through Revenue and Taxation Code Section 6487.06 for the Board to administer an in-state voluntary disclosure program for qualifying purchasers. This statute allows qualified in-state purchasers, who are not otherwise required to hold a seller’s permit or a consumer use tax permit, to register and report their use tax liability with a three-year statute of limitations. Normally, there is an eight-year
statute of limitations for the Board to issue deficiency determinations against purchasers who have not reported their use tax liability. As an incentive for qualified purchasers to participate in the voluntary disclosure program, Section 6487.06 limits the statute of limitations for the Board to issue a deficiency determination for unreported use to three years rather than eight years. The statute also provides for the relief of any penalties imposed upon qualified purchasers if the Board determines that the failure to report or remit the use tax was due to reasonable cause.

Section 6487.06 is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2005.

AMENDMENT

This bill extends Section 6487.06 of the Sales and Use Tax Law until January 1, 2008.

The bill also requires the FTB to revise the information accompanying the personal income tax and corporation tax returns to inform taxpayers of their use tax obligations.

The provisions of this bill are operative January 1, 2006.

BACKGROUND

The Board is the state agency responsible for administering the provisions of the use tax. However, in an effort to increase voluntary compliance by purchasers not registered with the Board, legislation enacted in 2003, SB 1009, (Alpert, Ch. 718) requires the FTB to add a line to the state's income tax forms allowing taxpayers to self-report their use tax liabilities to the FTB.

Historically, the largest area of noncompliance under the Sales and Use Tax Law is underreporting of the use tax. In 1993, the Board sponsored AB 1741 (Ch. 697, Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee) which added Section 6487.06. The Board’s intent in creating this voluntary disclosure program was to encourage voluntary compliance by individuals, as well as businesses; that are not required to hold a seller’s permit or a consumer use tax permit, to report their use tax liability with the incentive of reducing the period within which the Board may issue a deficiency determination against such taxpayers from eight years to three years. The shortened statute of limitations is patterned after Section 6487.05 which was added to the Revenue and Taxation Code in 1994, effective January 1, 1995. Section 6487.05 provides for a voluntary disclosure program for unregistered out-of-state retailers who have nexus in California to register and report past use tax liabilities, and also includes a shortened three-year statute of limitations. The in-state voluntary disclosure program for qualified purchasers is to encourage compliance in reporting the use tax in the same manner as Section 6487.05 does for unregistered out-of-state retailers.
Since the effective date of the statute, January 1, 2004, a total of 139 qualified purchasers have registered and reported $3,715,626 in use tax for periods within the three-year statute of limitations.

COMMENTS

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this bill is to increase use tax education and compliance.

2. **Key amendments.** The **August 24, 2005 amendments** deleted the provision that would have imposed an additional 10 percent penalty for a person’s failure to timely report and remit use tax. The **May 9, 2005 amendments** required the FTB to revise information accompanying the income tax returns (rather than revise the income tax returns, as the prior version of the bill would have required) to inform taxpayers of the additional penalty and benefit of paying use taxes prior to the expiration of Section 6487.06.

3. **Enactment of this bill will continue the incentive to report past use tax debts.** This statute has proven to be successful based on the past two years. Extending the sunset date will continue this incentive. In addition, the requirement that FTB provide more education on purchasers’ use tax obligations with its returns will assist in notifying all California taxpayers of their responsibilities under the Sales and Use Tax Law.
Assembly Bill 911 (Chu) Chapter 398
Sales Tax Amnesty Clean-Up

Urgency measure; effective September 29, 2005. Among its provisions, amends Section 7074 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill deletes the provision that specifies that a taxpayer may not file a claim for refund for any amounts paid in connection with the interest penalty imposed under the sales and use tax amnesty program. The bill also contains other income tax amnesty-related provisions sponsored by the Franchise Tax Board.

Sponsor: Assembly Member Judy Chu

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

Under California’s recent tax penalty amnesty provisions, Section 7074 imposes a 50% interest penalty when an underpayment of tax is found to be due during a period in which amnesty could have been requested (in other words, the amount of interest that accrues on an underpayment is increased by 50%). Included with this interest penalty imposed under the amnesty provisions, Section 6592 was amended to provide that if the Board finds that a person’s failure to pay the tax under the amnesty program was due to reasonable cause and circumstances beyond that person’s control, the person may be relieved of that 50% interest penalty. However, Section 7074 of the amnesty provisions specifically provides that no refund of this interest penalty is allowable.

AMENDMENT

This bill, among other provisions related to the Franchise Tax Board’s amnesty program, amends Section 7074 of the Sales and Use Tax Law to delete subdivision (d) which provides that a taxpayer may not file a claim for refund for any amounts paid in connection with the interest penalty imposed.

The provisions of this bill became effective September 29, 2005.

COMMENTS

1. Purpose. The purpose of this bill is to address unintended consequences of the income tax and sales and use tax amnesty-related provisions.
2. **Key amendments.** The **August 30, 2005 amendments**, among other things related to the FTB, deleted the provision that prohibits a taxpayer from filing a claim for refund for any amount paid in connection with the interest penalty imposed under the Board’s amnesty program. The **June 20, 2005 amendments** gutted and amended the bill to incorporate five income tax amnesty-related cleanup provisions. The **April 20, 2005 amendments** 1) added the provision that would have imposed a penalty equal to the amount of “qualified sales and use tax” not timely paid or remitted on depreciable property, 2) deleted the provisions that would have authorized the Board to provide certain information to the FTB, and 3) deleted the former penalty and audit provisions with respect to income tax deductions and credits. The **April 12, 2005 amendments** 1) added provisions requiring CPAs, PAs and California tax preparers to include Sales and Use Tax Law within the continuing education requirements, 2) added provisions requiring county assessors to provide the roll to the Board and to include a use tax return with business property statements, 3) added provisions authorizing the Board to provide county assessors information that would facilitate the assessors’ administration of the property tax, and 4) added penalty and audit provisions with respect to income tax deductions and credits.

3. **The bill deletes an inequitable provision.** The amendments to Section 7074 will prevent some unintended consequences when taxpayers pay the 50% interest penalty before they request relief due to reasonable cause. Under current law, a person could be relieved of the penalty if the Board finds that his or her failure to pay the tax was due to reasonable cause, provided the person hasn’t actually paid the penalty. If the person paid the interest penalty and then sought relief, the law would not allow a refund. This change will correct this inequity. Also, it will put the 50% interest penalty on the same footing with the same relief and refund rights, as all other penalties in the law, including the other amnesty provisions which require the Board to double the penalties if the Board finds an underreporting or nonreporting of tax by any person who could have applied for amnesty. This will also ensure that taxpayers are afforded the same appeal rights for these penalties as any others.

4. **Related legislation.** AB 1614 (Klehs) was amended on August 15, 2005 to incorporate income tax amnesty cleanup provisions. The bill was held in suspense in the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee.
Assembly Bill 1765 (Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation)
Chapter 519
Electronic Funds Transfers

Urgency measure; effective October 4, 2005. Among its provisions, amends, repeals, and adds Section 6479.3 to the Revenue and Taxation Code.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill:

- Eliminates the requirement that persons voluntarily electing to remit amounts due by electronic funds transfers must do so for a minimum of one year, in order to encourage more voluntary participation.

- Specifies that, until January 1, 2006, persons whose estimated tax liability average $20,000 or more per month, shall remit amounts due by an electronic funds transfer. In addition, the bill lowers the $20,000 threshold to $10,000 operative January 1, 2006.

Sponsor: Board of Equalization

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

Under existing law, Section 6479.3 of the Revenue and Taxation Code provides the statutory authority to require taxpayers with monthly tax liabilities averaging $20,000 or more to remit their tax payments via an electronic funds transfer (EFT). Under the law, other taxpayers may voluntarily elect to remit their tax liabilities via the EFT method, but the law requires that these taxpayers continue this method of payment for a minimum of one year.

Under existing law, as modified by AB 139 (Ch. 74, Assembly Budget Committee) of the 2005-06 Regular Session, effective July 19, 2005, persons whose estimated sales and use tax liability average $10,000 or more per month are required to remit their tax payments by an electronic funds transfer. Prior to the enactment of AB 139, persons whose estimated sales and use tax liability averaged $20,000 or more per month were required to remit their tax payments by an electronic funds transfer.

AMENDMENT

Among its provisions, the amendments 1) make the changes to Section 6479.3 of the Sales and Use Tax Law enacted by AB 139 operative January 1, 2006, and 2) delete the provision that requires those taxpayers who voluntarily remit their funds by the EFT method to continue that method for a minimum of one year.
COMMENT

Purpose. The purpose of these amendments is, first, since enactment of AB 1765 chapters out AB 139’s amendments to Section 6479.3, AB 1765 requires the amendment to incorporate the changes that AB 139 created. Secondly, AB 139 became effective immediately – on July 19, 2005 - allowing virtually no lead time for the Board or taxpayers to prepare for the changes. In order to successfully implement AB 139’s provisions, detailed, cooperative efforts are necessary with taxpayers and within the internal processes of the Board to prepare for the approximate 11,500 new taxpayers that are required to remit their tax payments through the electronic funds transfer method. Consequently, this change makes the operative date January 1, 2006 to allow the Board sufficient time to successfully implement the program.

Thirdly, in 1991, when the EFT provisions were added into the law, the process to transmit and accept payments via EFT was a relatively new concept. The one-year minimum requirement was incorporated into the provisions, because it was believed at the time that acceptance of payments in different forms from the same taxpayer could complicate matters. However, now with the frequency and familiarity with the EFT payment methodology, the one-year minimum requirement is no longer necessary. And, most taxpayers that voluntarily choose to remit their payments via EFT likely prefer that method, so there is no apparent reason to require volunteers to commit to the EFT program for a year or more at the outset. In fact, such a requirement could actually discourage taxpayers from volunteering for the EFT program.
Senate Bill 203 (Simitian) Chapter 682
Transactions and Use Taxes – San Mateo County

Effective January 1, 2006. Adds Chapter 2.995 (commencing with Section 7286.90) to Part 1.7 of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill authorizes the County of San Mateo, with two-thirds approval of the voters in the county, to levy a transactions and use tax at a rate of 0.125 or 0.25 percent for park and recreation purposes.

Sponsor: County of San Mateo

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

The Transactions and Use Tax Law (commencing with Section 7251 of the Revenue and Taxation Code) authorizes counties to impose transactions and use taxes under specified conditions. Section 7285 of the Transactions and Use Tax Law authorizes a county to impose a transactions and use tax for general purposes at a rate of 0.25 percent, or multiple thereof, if the ordinance proposing the tax is approved by a two-thirds vote of the board of supervisors and a majority vote of the qualified voters of the county. Section 7285.5 of the Transactions and Use Tax Law authorizes a county to impose a transactions and use tax for special purposes at a rate of 0.25 percent, or multiple thereof, if the ordinance proposing the tax is approved by a two-thirds vote of the board of supervisors and a two-thirds vote of the qualified voters of the county.

Section 7286.59 of the Transactions and Use Tax Law authorizes a county to impose a transactions and use tax for library purposes at a rate of 0.125 or 0.25 percent for a period not to exceed 16 years, if the ordinance proposing the tax is approved by the board of supervisors and a two-thirds vote of the qualified voters of the county.

Section 7285.8 of the Transactions and Use Tax authorizes the County of San Mateo to establish an authority for the support of public elementary and secondary education. Under Section 7285.8, the authority may impose a transactions and use tax at a rate of 0.50 percent, if the ordinance proposing the tax is approved by two-thirds vote of the governing board of the authority, and is subject to any other applicable voter approval.
The maximum allowable combined rate of transactions and use taxes levied in any county may not exceed 2 percent.

Counties are required to contract with the Board to perform all functions in the administration and operations of the ordinances imposing the transactions and use tax.

**AMENDMENT**

This bill adds Chapter 2.995 (commencing with Section 7286.90) to Part 1.7 of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code to authorize the County of San Mateo to impose a transactions and use tax at a rate of 0.125 or 0.25 percent, if the ordinance imposing the tax is approved by a two-thirds vote of all members of the board of supervisors and is subsequently approved by a two-thirds vote of the voters of the county. This bill requires that the ordinance include an expenditure plan describing the purposes for the tax revenues.

This bill requires that the tax be imposed for a specified period of time. However, there is no time period specified in the bill.

This bill provides that a tax imposed under this section is in lieu of, and not in addition to, a tax imposed for park and recreation purposes under Section 7285.5 of the Revenue and Taxation Code.

This bill requires that the tax revenues be used exclusively for park and recreation acquisition, improvements, maintenance, programs, and operations within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county.

**BACKGROUND**

Currently, San Mateo County has two transactions and use taxes being levied within its borders. The tax rates are 0.50 percent each for a total countywide transactions and use tax rate of 1 percent. The total state and local tax rate in all areas of San Mateo County is 8.25 percent.

The following provides a background of San Mateo County’s two transactions and use taxes. Assembly Bill 2901 (Chapter 502, Stats. 1974) established the San Mateo County Transit District (District) pursuant to Division 10, Part 15 (commencing with Section 103000) of the Public Utilities Code for the purposes of addressing the public transit problems in the county. In July 1981, the board of directors of the District approved an ordinance to impose a transactions and use tax at a rate of 0.50 percent pursuant to Section 103350 of the Public Utilities Code. The tax revenues would be used exclusively for public transit operations and maintenance, including buses, paratransit, rail, and shuttles. The District entered into a contract with the Board to administer the transactions and use tax ordinance. The operative date of the ordinance was July 1, 1982.

In 1988, the voters of San Mateo County approved a ballot measure known as “Measure A,” which created the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (Authority) and authorized the imposition of a 0.50 percent transactions and use tax pursuant to Division 12.5 (commencing with Section 131000) of the Public Utilities...
Code. The tax would be imposed for a period not to exceed 20 years, ending December 31, 2008. The tax revenues would be used for highway and transit improvements as described in the transportation expenditure plan in the ordinance.

At the November 2, 2004 General Election, voters of San Mateo County approved the extension of the 0.50 percent transactions and use tax pursuant to Division 12.5 of the Public Utilities Code for an additional 25 years, operative January 1, 2009 and ending December 31, 2034.

**COMMENTS**

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this bill is to provide additional funding for parks and recreation within the County of San Mateo.

2. **Key amendments.** The June 21 amendments authorize the County of San Mateo, with the approval of two-thirds of the voters in San Mateo County, to levy a transactions and use tax at a rate of 0.125 or 0.25 percent for park and recreation purposes. The previous version of the bill did not fall under the purview of the Board and was related to an integrated case management system to manage long-term welfare-dependent families' services.

3. **Counties are authorized to impose transactions and use taxes at a rate of 0.25 percent, or multiples of 0.25 percent.** Under the Transactions and Use Tax Law, counties are authorized to impose transactions and use taxes for general or special purposes at a rate of 0.25 percent, or multiples of a 0.25 percent, subject to voter approval. With the exception of Section 7286.59 that authorizes counties to impose a tax at a rate of 0.125 or 0.25 percent for library purposes, there is no authority for a county to impose a transactions and use tax at a rate of 0.125 percent. Therefore, in order for San Mateo County to impose a tax, upon approval of the voters, at a rate of 0.125 percent special legislation is needed.

4. **Two percent cap.** Under current law, the combined rate of all transactions and use taxes imposed in any county cannot exceed 2 percent. Prior to enactment of this measure, San Mateo County imposed two transactions and use taxes at rates of 0.50 percent each for a combined transactions and use tax rate of 1 percent. Thus, of the 2 percent countywide cap, San Mateo County had a total of 1 percent left.

5. **This bill provides that a transactions and use tax imposed under the provisions of this bill is in lieu of, and not in addition to, a tax imposed under Section 7285.5.** Prior to enactment of this measure, San Mateo County did not impose a transactions and use tax under Section 7285.5. The two transactions and use taxes imposed in San Mateo County were imposed under the Public Utilities Code.

This bill prohibits San Mateo County from imposing a tax for park and recreation purposes under Section 7285.5, and from also imposing a tax under Section 7286.90. In other words, the county can impose only one tax for the purposes described under Section 7286.90.
6. Related Legislation. This bill was identical to AB 970 (Yee, et al), as amended June 9, 2005. However, AB 970 was gutted and amended with unrelated provisions on September 6, 2005.
Senate Bill 322 (Migden) Chapter 172
ABC Licensee Information

Effective January 1, 2006. Adds Section 23058 to the Business and Professions Code.

BILL SUMMARY

This bill requires the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board (ABC) each quarter to electronically transmit to the Board a report on the alcoholic beverage licenses issued or transferred, as specified, at no cost.

Sponsor: Senator Carole Migden

LAW PRIOR TO AMENDMENT

Under the State Constitution, the ABC is granted the exclusive authority to administer the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act in accordance with laws enacted by the Legislature. This involves licensing individuals and businesses associated with the manufacture, importation, and sale of alcoholic beverages in this state and the collection of license fees or occupation taxes for this purpose. Under this Act, a license is required for the privilege of selling all types of alcoholic beverages, namely, beer, wine, and distilled spirits. However, this Act does not require that a seller’s permit be obtained as a prerequisite to obtaining a license.

Under California’s Sales and Use Tax Law, every person desiring to engage in or conduct business as a seller of tangible personal property within this state is required to apply to the Board for a seller’s permit for each place of business. In general, a seller’s permit must be obtained if a person intends to sell or lease tangible personal property, including alcohol, that would ordinarily be subject to sales tax if sold at retail. The requirement to obtain a seller's permit applies to individuals, partnerships, corporations, organizations, limited liability partnerships and limited liability companies. Both wholesalers and retailers are required to apply for a seller's permit.

AMENDMENT

This bill adds Section 23058 to the Business and Professions Code to require the ABC to electronically transmit to the Board each quarter, at no cost, a report on the licenses issued or transferred pursuant the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act. The bill requires that the report include the names and addresses of all persons to whom the license is issued or transferred, the type of license issued or transferred, and the effective date of the license or transfer. With respect to transfers, the bill requires that the report additionally include the names and addresses of the transferors.
The bill also requires that the information be transmitted to the Board in a format agreed upon by the Board and the ABC.

The bill becomes operative January 1, 2006.

IN GENERAL

Current law does not specifically require an applicant to possess a seller’s permit prior to applying for an alcoholic beverage license; however, both the Board and the ABC alert applicants of the requirements under the law. The Board’s seller’s permit application has a space to designate the applicant’s alcoholic beverage license number. If an alcoholic beverage license is applied for, but not yet issued, the BOE will nevertheless issue a seller’s permit and make a notation that the alcoholic beverage license is pending. Board staff instructs the applicant to provide the alcoholic beverage license information when it is obtained. Applicants generally do respond back with the number.

The ABC, as part of its application requirements, currently provides information on its web site alerting potential applicants of the seller’s permit requirements and provides a link to the Board’s web site for further information.

COMMENTS

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of this bill is to ensure that every person that obtains a liquor license is properly registered as a seller with the Board.

2. **Key amendments.** The April 21, 2005 amendments deleted the provisions contained in the introduced version which would have required that the application to obtain a license to sell alcoholic beverages include a copy of the applicant’s valid seller’s permit issued by the Board. Instead the bill now requires ABC to electronically transmit to the Board specified information regarding licenses and transfers issued.

3. **The bill will enable the Board to verify whether an alcoholic beverage licensee is properly registered under the Sales and Use Tax Law.** Having access to the information that ABC has in an electronic format will provide a valuable tool for the Board to identify any persons to whom an ABC license is issued or transferred that may be operating without a seller’s permit. Also, the information regarding transferors that ABC will be required to transmit to the Board will also enable the Board to update current permit holders’ registration information.
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