
HOUSE BILL 3147

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Representatives Ormsby, Kessler, Pettigrew, Armstrong, Hinkle, Warnick, Condotta, and Kenney; by request of Department of Revenue

Read first time 01/28/10. Referred to Committee on Finance.

1 AN ACT Relating to sales and use tax exemptions for certain
2 equipment and infrastructure contained in data centers; adding a new
3 section to chapter 82.08 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 82.12
4 RCW; creating a new section; providing an effective date; providing
5 expiration dates; and declaring an emergency.

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

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) It is the legislature's intent to
8 encourage immediate investments in technology facilities that can
9 provide an economic stimulus, sustain long-term jobs that provide
10 living wages, and help build the digital infrastructure that can enable
11 the state to be competitive for additional technology investment and
12 jobs.

13 (2) There is currently an intense competition for data center
14 construction and operation in many states including: Oregon, Arizona,
15 North and South Carolina, North Dakota, Iowa, Virginia, Texas, and
16 Illinois. Unprecedented incentives are available as a result of the
17 desire of these states to attract investments that will serve as a
18 catalyst for additional clusters of economic activity.

1 (3) Since the economic downturn, Washington has not succeeded in
2 attracting any private investments in these centers after siting six
3 major data centers between 2004 and 2007.

4 (4) Data center technology has advanced rapidly, with marked
5 increases in energy efficiency. Large, commercial-grade data centers
6 leverage the economies of scale to reduce energy consumption.
7 Combining digitized processes with the economies of scale recognized at
8 these data centers, today's enterprises can materially reduce the
9 energy they consume and greatly improve their efficiency.

10 (5) The legislature finds that a fifteen-month window that offers
11 an exemption for server and related electrical equipment and
12 installation will act as a stimulus to incent immediate investment.
13 This investment will bring jobs, tax revenues, and economic growth to
14 some of our state's rural areas.

15 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 82.08 RCW
16 to read as follows:

17 (1) An exemption from the tax imposed by RCW 82.08.020 is provided
18 for sales to qualifying businesses of eligible server equipment to be
19 installed, without intervening use, in an eligible computer data
20 center, and to charges made for labor and services rendered in respect
21 to installing eligible server equipment. The exemption also applies to
22 sales to qualifying businesses of eligible power infrastructure,
23 including labor and services rendered in respect to constructing,
24 installing, repairing, altering, or improving eligible power
25 infrastructure.

26 (2)(a) In order to claim the exemption under this section, a
27 qualifying business must submit an application to the department for an
28 exemption certificate. The application must include the information
29 necessary, as required by the department, to determine that a business
30 qualifies for the exemption under this section. The department must
31 issue exemption certificates to qualifying businesses. The department
32 may assign a unique identification number to each exemption certificate
33 issued under this section.

34 (b) A qualifying business claiming the exemption under this section
35 must present the seller with an exemption certificate in a form and
36 manner prescribed by the department. The seller must retain a copy of
37 the certificate for the seller's files.

1 (3) For purposes of this section the following definitions apply
2 unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

3 (a)(i) "Computer data center" means a facility comprised of one or
4 more buildings constructed or refurbished specifically, and used
5 primarily, to house working servers, where the facility has the
6 following characteristics: (A) Uninterruptible power supplies,
7 generator backup power, or both; (B) sophisticated fire suppression and
8 prevention systems; and (C) enhanced physical security, such as:
9 Restricted access to the facility to selected personnel; permanent
10 security guards; video camera surveillance; an electronic system
11 requiring passcodes, keycards, or biometric scans, such as hand scans
12 and retinal or fingerprint recognition; or similar security features.

13 (ii) For a computer data center comprised of multiple buildings,
14 each separate building constructed or refurbished specifically, and
15 used primarily, to house working servers is considered a computer data
16 center if it has all of the characteristics listed in (a)(i)(A) through
17 (C) of this subsection (3).

18 (b) "Electronic data storage and data management services" include,
19 but are not limited to: Providing data storage and backup services,
20 providing computer processing power, hosting enterprise software
21 applications, and hosting web sites. The term also includes providing
22 services such as e-mail, web browsing and searching, media
23 applications, and other online services, regardless of whether a charge
24 is made for such services.

25 (c) "Eligible computer data center" means a computer data center:

26 (i) Located in a rural county as defined in RCW 82.14.370;

27 (ii) Having at least twenty thousand square feet dedicated to
28 housing working servers, where the server space has not previously been
29 dedicated to housing working servers; and

30 (iii) For which the commencement of construction occurs after March
31 31, 2010, and before July 1, 2011. For purposes of this section,
32 "commencement of construction" means the date that a building permit is
33 issued under the building code adopted under RCW 19.27.031 for
34 construction of the computer data center. The construction of a
35 computer data center includes the expansion, renovation, or other
36 improvements made to existing facilities, including leased or rented
37 space. "Commencement of construction" does not include soil testing,

1 site clearing and grading, site preparation, or any other related
2 activities that are initiated before the issuance of a building permit
3 for the construction of the foundation of a computer data center.

4 (d) "Eligible power infrastructure" means all fixtures and
5 equipment necessary for the transformation, distribution, or management
6 of electricity that is required to operate eligible server equipment
7 within an eligible computer data center. The term includes electrical
8 substations, generators, wiring, and cogeneration equipment.

9 (e) "Eligible server equipment" means the original server equipment
10 installed in an eligible computer data center on or after April 1,
11 2010, and replacement server equipment. For purposes of this
12 subsection (3)(e), "replacement server equipment" means server
13 equipment that: (i) Replaces existing server equipment, if the sale or
14 use of the server equipment to be replaced qualified for an exemption
15 under this section or section 3 of this act; and (ii) is installed and
16 put into regular use before April 1, 2018.

17 (f) "Qualifying business" means a business entity that exists for
18 the primary purpose of engaging in commercial activity for profit and
19 that is the owner or lessee of an eligible computer data center. The
20 term does not include the state or federal government or any of their
21 departments, agencies, and institutions; tribal governments; political
22 subdivisions of this state; or any municipal, quasi-municipal, public,
23 or other corporation created by the state or federal government, tribal
24 government, municipality, or political subdivision of the state.

25 (g) "Server" means blade or rack-mount server computers used in a
26 computer data center exclusively to provide electronic data storage and
27 data management services for internal use by the owner or lessee of the
28 computer data center, for clients of the owner or lessee of the
29 computer data center, or both. "Server" does not include personal
30 computers.

31 (h) "Server equipment" means the server chassis and all computer
32 hardware and software contained within the server chassis. "Server
33 equipment" does not include the racks upon which the server chassis is
34 installed, and computer peripherals such as keyboards, monitors,
35 printers, mice, and other devices that work outside of the computer.

36 (4) This section expires April 1, 2018.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 82.12 RCW
2 to read as follows:

3 (1) An exemption from the tax imposed by RCW 82.12.020 is provided
4 for the use by qualifying businesses of eligible server equipment to be
5 installed, without intervening use, in an eligible computer data
6 center, and to the use of labor and services rendered in respect to
7 installing such server equipment. The exemption also applies to the
8 use of power infrastructure, including labor and services rendered in
9 respect to installing, repairing, altering, or improving such
10 infrastructure.

11 (2) A qualifying business is not eligible for the exemption under
12 this section unless the department issued an exemption certificate to
13 the qualifying business for the exemption provided in section 2 of this
14 act.

15 (3) The definitions in section 2 of this act apply to this section.

16 (4) This section expires April 1, 2018.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** This act is necessary for the immediate
18 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the
19 state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect
20 April 1, 2010.

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