

JAN 25 2017

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TAXATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The sale and provision of services by
2 businesses based and domiciled in Hawaii to the federal
3 government are a vital part of our state and local economy that
4 provides jobs, economic development, and opportunities for local
5 residents to establish well-paying careers in Hawaii to sustain
6 themselves and their families.

7 Although federal contracting is a highly lucrative field
8 that can greatly benefit our local businesses and economy, it
9 has become increasingly apparent that small businesses domiciled
10 and based in Hawaii are finding themselves at a huge competitive
11 disadvantage in bidding for and being awarded federal contracts
12 because of the Hawaii general excise tax. Of the approximately
13 \$2,000,000,000 of federal contracts that are available for bid
14 annually in Hawaii, approximately \$900,000,000 of that is set
15 aside on a competitive basis for small businesses. Most of
16 these small business contracts are being awarded to businesses
17 that are not domiciled or based in Hawaii.



1 The effective Hawaii general excise tax rate for sales and
2 services taking place in the City and County of Honolulu is
3 4.712 per cent and applies to the sale of goods and services to
4 the federal government by and through Hawaii businesses, even
5 though the sale of goods alone to the federal government is not
6 subject to the general excise tax. Hawaii is one of only three
7 states in the nation -- the others being Washington and
8 Vermont -- that apply the general excise tax to the provision
9 and sale of goods and services by businesses based in their
10 states to the federal government.

11 Businesses domiciled and based in Hawaii must always
12 include the general excise tax on their federal bids as a matter
13 of their compliance with state law, while out-of-state
14 contractors do not because they are not domiciled or based in
15 Hawaii. This unequal treatment of in-state versus out-of-state
16 businesses is further exacerbated because federal agencies that
17 oversee the federal bidding process have opined that since the
18 sale of goods to the federal government in Hawaii is not subject
19 to the general excise tax, they will not require insertion or
20 enforcement of this tax on bids for goods and services submitted
21 to it. When coupled with the "lowest price technically



1 accepted" rubric used by the federal government to select
2 contract bidders who bid the lowest amount, Hawaii domiciled
3 businesses routinely find themselves at a 4.712 per cent
4 disadvantage.

5 The impact of this competitive disadvantage to Hawaii-based
6 businesses reduces the amount of economic activity in the State
7 and transfers business opportunities and jobs off-shore to out-
8 of-state competitors. It decreases the amount of tax revenues
9 the State is able to collect for personal and business income
10 taxes from employees and businesses located in Hawaii. It also
11 has the cascading effect of creating an incentive for Hawaii
12 based businesses who are engaged in federal contracting to move
13 out of Hawaii to maintain their competitiveness and to be
14 successful in obtaining federal contracts.

15 The purpose of this Act is to remove the competitive
16 disadvantage that businesses domiciled and located in Hawaii
17 face when dealing with the federal government by providing these
18 businesses with an exemption from the Hawaii general excise tax
19 for the sale of goods and services to the federal government.

20 SECTION 2. Section 237-25, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
21 amended to read as follows:



1 "§237-25 Exemptions of sales and gross proceeds of sales
2 to federal government, and credit unions. (a) Any provision of
3 law to the contrary notwithstanding, there shall be exempted
4 from, and excluded from the measures of, the tax imposed by
5 chapter 237 all sales, and the gross proceeds of all sales, of:

6 (1) Intoxicating liquor, as defined in chapter 281,
7 hereafter sold by any person licensed under chapter
8 281 to the United States (including any agency or
9 instrumentality of the United States that is wholly
10 owned or otherwise so constituted as to be immune from
11 the levy of a tax under chapter 238 or 244D but not
12 including national banks), or to any organization to
13 which that sale is permitted by the proviso of "Class
14 3" of section 281-31, located on any Army, Navy, or
15 Air Force reservation, but the person making the sale
16 shall nevertheless, within the meaning of chapters
17 237, 244D, and 281 be deemed to be a licensed seller;

18 (2) Tobacco products and cigarettes, as defined in chapter
19 245, sold by any person licensed under the chapter to
20 the United States (including any agency or
21 instrumentality thereof that is wholly owned or



1 otherwise so constituted as to be immune from the levy
2 of a tax under chapter 238 or 245 but not including
3 national banks), but the person making the sale shall
4 nevertheless, within the meaning of chapters 237 and
5 245, be deemed to be a licensed seller;

6 (3) ~~[Other]~~ Services or tangible personal property sold by
7 any person licensed under this chapter to the United
8 States (including any agency, instrumentality, or
9 federal credit union thereof but not including
10 national banks), ~~[and to any state chartered credit~~
11 ~~union,]~~ but the person making such sale shall
12 nevertheless, within the meaning of this chapter, be
13 deemed a licensed seller; ~~[and]~~

14 (4) Other tangible personal property sold by any person
15 licensed under this chapter to any state-chartered
16 credit union, but the person making such sale shall
17 nevertheless, within the meaning of this chapter, be
18 deemed a licensed seller; and

19 ~~[-(4)]~~ (5) When the amount of property sold by a licensee
20 turns upon the amount of the property sold through a
21 vending machine or similar device to the customer



S.B. NO. 1058

Report Title:

General Excise Tax; Federal Sales of Services and Products

Description:

Exempts sales of services or tangible personal property from GET licenses to the federal government from the general excise tax.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

