

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 1230
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Short Title: Motor Fuel Tax Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senators Kerr, Cochrane, Dalton, Hartsell, and Hoyle.

Referred to: Finance.

May 21, 1998

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO EXEMPT RACING GASOLINE FROM THE PER GALLON EXCISE
2 TAX, TO CLARIFY THE TAXATION OF KEROSENE, AND TO MAKE OTHER
3 CHANGES IN THE MOTOR FUEL TAX LAWS.
4

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 Section 1. G.S. 105-449.39 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 105-449.39. Credit for payment of motor fuel tax.**

8 Every motor carrier subject to the tax levied by this Article is entitled to a credit for
9 tax paid by the carrier on fuel purchased in the State. A motor carrier who files a
10 quarterly report is entitled to a credit at a rate equal to the flat cents-per-gallon rate plus
11 the variable cents-per-gallon rate of tax in effect during the quarter for which the credit
12 is claimed. A motor carrier who files an annual report is entitled to a credit at a rate
13 equal to the flat cents-per-gallon rate plus the average of the two variable cents-per-
14 gallon rates of tax in effect during the year for which the credit is claimed. To obtain a
15 credit, the motor carrier must furnish evidence satisfactory to the Secretary that the tax
16 for which the credit is claimed has been paid.

17 If the amount of a credit to which a motor carrier is entitled for a reporting period
18 exceeds the motor carrier's liability for that reporting period, ~~the excess may, in~~
19 ~~accordance with rules adopted by the Secretary, be refunded to the motor carrier or carried~~
20 ~~forward and applied to the motor carrier's tax liability for another reporting period. Before the~~
21 ~~Secretary allows a motor carrier a refund, the Secretary may audit the motor carrier's records or~~
22 ~~require the motor carrier to furnish a bond under G.S. 105-449.40. the Secretary must refund~~
23 the excess to the motor carrier."

1 Section 2. G.S. 105-449.52(b) reads as rewritten:

2 "(b) Hearing. – Any person denying liability for a penalty imposed under this
3 section ~~may~~ must pay the penalty under protest and apply to the Department of Revenue
4 for a hearing. Upon receiving a request for a hearing, the Secretary shall schedule a
5 hearing before a duly designated employee or agent of the Department within 30 days
6 after receipt of the request. If after the hearing the Department determines that the
7 person was not liable for the penalty, the amount collected shall be refunded. If after the
8 hearing the Department determines that the person was liable for the penalty, the person
9 paying the penalty may bring an action in the Superior Court of Wake County against
10 the Secretary of Revenue for refund of the penalty. No restraining order or injunction
11 shall issue from any court of the State to restrain or enjoin the collection of the penalty
12 or to permit the operation of the vehicle without payment of the penalty."

13 Section 3. G.S. 105-449.60 reads as rewritten:

14 "**§ 105-449.60. Definitions.**

15 The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 16 (1) Antiknock Index Number. – The arithmetic average of the American
17 Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Research octane number
18 (RON) and the ASTM Motor octane number (MON), that is (RON +
19 MON)/2.
- 20 (4) (1a) Blended fuel. – A mixture composed of gasoline or diesel fuel and
21 another liquid, other than a de minimus amount of a product such as
22 carburetor detergent or oxidation inhibitor, that can be used as a fuel in
23 a highway vehicle.
- 24 (2) Blender. – A person who produces blended fuel outside the terminal
25 transfer system.
- 26 (3) Bulk-end user. – A person who maintains storage facilities for motor
27 fuel and uses part or all of the stored fuel to operate a highway vehicle.
- 28 (4) Bulk plant. – A motor fuel storage and distribution facility that is not a
29 terminal and from which motor fuel may be removed at a rack.
- 30 (5) Code. – Defined in G.S. 105-228.90.
- 31 (6) Destination state. – The state, territory, or foreign country to which
32 motor fuel is directed for delivery into a storage facility, a receptacle, a
33 container, or a type of transportation equipment for the purpose of
34 resale or use.
- 35 (7) Diesel fuel. – Any liquid, other than gasoline, that is suitable for use as
36 a fuel in a diesel-powered highway vehicle. The term includes
37 kerosene. The term does not include jet fuel sold to a buyer who is
38 certified to purchase jet fuel under the Code.
- 39 (8) Distributor. – A person who acquires motor fuel from a supplier or
40 from another distributor for subsequent sale.
- 41 (9) Dyed diesel fuel. – Diesel fuel that meets the dyeing and marking
42 requirements of § 4082 of the Code.
- 43 (10) Elective supplier. – A supplier that is required to be licensed in this
44 State and that elects to collect the excise tax due this State on motor

1 fuel that is removed by the supplier at a terminal located in another
2 state and has this State as its destination state.

3 (11) Export. – To obtain motor fuel in this State for sale or other
4 distribution in another state. In applying this definition, motor fuel
5 delivered out-of-state by or for the seller constitutes an export by the
6 seller and motor fuel delivered out-of-state by or for the purchaser
7 constitutes an export by the purchaser.

8 (12) Fuel alcohol. – Methanol or fuel grade ethanol.

9 (13) Fuel alcohol provider. – A person who does any of the following:

10 a. Produces fuel alcohol.

11 b. Imports fuel alcohol outside the terminal transfer system by
12 means of a marine vessel, a transport truck, or a railroad tank
13 car.

14 (14) Gasohol. – A blended fuel composed of gasoline and fuel grade
15 ethanol.

16 (15) Gasoline. – Any of the following:

17 a. All products that are commonly or commercially known or sold
18 as gasoline and are suitable for use as a fuel in a highway
19 vehicle, other than products used as racing fuel that ~~have an~~
20 ~~American Society for Testing Materials octane number of less than~~
21 ~~75 as determined by the motor method.~~ meet any of the following
22 descriptions:

23 1. Have an Antiknock Index Number of less than 80,

24 2. Have an Antiknock Index Number of more than 100,
25 contain more than 0.05 grams per gallon of lead, and
26 have a 90 percent (90%) evaporation at a maximum of
27 290 degrees Fahrenheit as determined by the American
28 Society for Testing and Materials Test Method D 86,

29 3. Have an Antiknock Index Number of more than 100,
30 contain more than 2.8 weight percent oxygen, and have a
31 90 percent (90%) evaporation at a maximum
32 temperature of 290 degrees Fahrenheit as determined by
33 the American Society for Testing and Materials Test
34 Method D 86.

35 b. A petroleum product component of gasoline, such as naphtha,
36 reformate, or toluene.

37 c. Gasohol.

38 d. Fuel grade ethanol.

39 The term does not include aviation gasoline sold for use in an aircraft
40 motor. 'Aviation gasoline' is gasoline that is designed for use in an
41 aircraft motor and is not adapted for use in an ordinary highway
42 vehicle.

43 (16) Gross gallons. – The total amount of motor fuel measured in gallons,
44 exclusive of any temperature, pressure, or other adjustments.

- 1 (17) Highway. – Defined in G.S. 20-4.01(13).
- 2 (18) Highway vehicle. – A self-propelled vehicle that is designed for use on
3 a highway.
- 4 (19) Import. – To bring motor fuel into this State by any means of
5 conveyance other than in the fuel supply tank of a highway vehicle. In
6 applying this definition, motor fuel delivered into this State from out-
7 of-state by or for the seller constitutes an import by the seller, and
8 motor fuel delivered into this State from out-of-state by or for the
9 purchaser constitutes an import by the purchaser.
- 10 (19a) In-State-only supplier. – Either of the following:
- 11 a. A supplier that is required to have a license and elects not to
12 collect the excise tax due this State on motor fuel that is
13 removed by the supplier at a terminal located in another state
14 and has this State as its destination state.
- 15 b. A supplier that does business only in this State.
- 16 (20) Motor fuel. – Gasoline, diesel fuel, and blended fuel.
- 17 (21) Motor fuel rate. – The rate of tax set in G.S. 105-449.80.
- 18 (22) Motor fuel transporter. – A person who transports motor fuel outside
19 the terminal transfer system by means of a transport truck, a railroad
20 tank car, or a marine vessel.
- 21 (23) Net gallons. – The amount of motor fuel measured in gallons when
22 corrected to a temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit and a pressure of
23 14 7/10 pounds per square inch.
- 24 (24) Permissive supplier. – An out-of-state supplier that elects, but is not
25 required, to have a supplier's license under this Article.
- 26 (25) Person. – Defined in G.S. 105-228.90.
- 27 (26) Position holder. – The person who holds the inventory position in
28 motor fuel in a terminal, as reflected on the records of the terminal
29 operator. A person holds the inventory position in motor fuel when
30 that person has a contract with the terminal operator for the use of
31 storage facilities and terminaling services for fuel at the terminal. The
32 term includes a terminal operator who owns fuel in the terminal.
- 33 (27) Rack. – A mechanism for delivering motor fuel from a refinery, a
34 terminal, or a bulk plant into a transport truck, a railroad tank car, or
35 another means of transfer that is outside the terminal transfer system.
- 36 (28) Removal. – A physical transfer other than by evaporation, loss, or
37 destruction. A physical transfer to a transport truck or another means
38 of conveyance outside the terminal transfer system is complete upon
39 delivery into the means of conveyance.
- 40 (29) Retailer. – A person who maintains storage facilities for motor fuel
41 and who sells the fuel at retail or dispenses the fuel at a retail location.
- 42 (30) Secretary. – Defined in G.S. 105-228.90.
- 43 (31) Supplier. – Any of the following:

- 1 a. A position holder or a person who receives motor fuel pursuant
 2 to a two-party ~~exchange-transaction~~.
- 3 b. A fuel alcohol provider.
- 4 (32) System transfer. – Either of the following:
- 5 a. A transfer of motor fuel within the terminal transfer system.
- 6 b. A transfer, by transport truck or railroad tank car, of fuel grade
 7 ethanol.
- 8 (33) Tank wagon. – A truck that is not a transport truck and has multiple
 9 compartments designed or used to carry motor fuel.
- 10 (33a) Tax. – An inspection or other excise tax on motor fuel and any other
 11 fee or charge imposed on motor fuel on a per-gallon basis.
- 12 (34) Terminal. – A motor fuel storage and distribution facility that has been
 13 assigned a terminal control number by the Internal Revenue Service, is
 14 supplied by pipeline or marine vessel, and from which motor fuel may
 15 be removed at a rack.
- 16 (35) Terminal operator. – A person who owns, operates, or otherwise
 17 controls a terminal.
- 18 (36) Terminal transfer system. – The motor fuel distribution system
 19 consisting of refineries, pipelines, marine vessels, and terminals. The
 20 term has the same meaning as 'bulk transfer/terminal system' under 26
 21 C.F.R. § 48.4081-1.
- 22 (37) Transmix. – Either of the following:
- 23 a. The buffer or interface between two different products in a
 24 pipeline shipment.
- 25 b. A mix of two different products within a refinery or terminal
 26 that results in an off-grade mixture.
- 27 (38) Transport truck. – A semitrailer combination rig designed or used to
 28 transport loads of motor fuel over a highway.
- 29 (39) Trustee. – A person who is licensed as a supplier, an elective supplier,
 30 or a permissive supplier and who receives tax payments from and on
 31 behalf of a licensed distributor.
- 32 (40) Two-party ~~exchange-transaction~~. – A transaction in which motor fuel is
 33 transferred from one licensed supplier to another licensed supplier
 34 pursuant to an exchange agreement or a sale whereby the supplier that
 35 is the position holder agrees to deliver motor fuel to the other supplier
 36 or the other supplier's customer at the rack of the terminal at which the
 37 delivering supplier is the position holder.
- 38 (41) User. – A person who owns or operates a licensed highway vehicle and
 39 does not maintain storage facilities for motor fuel."

40 Section 4. G.S. 105-449.72 is amended by adding the following new
 41 subsection to read:

42 "(d) Replacements. – When a license holder files a bond or an irrevocable letter of
 43 credit as a replacement for a previously filed bond or letter of credit and the license

1 holder has paid all taxes and penalties due under this Article, the Secretary must take
2 one of the following actions:

- 3 (1) Return the previously filed bond or letter of credit.
- 4 (2) Notify the person liable on the previously filed bond and the license
5 holder that the person is released from liability on the bond."

6 Section 5. G.S. 105-449.87(b) reads as rewritten:

7 "(b) Liability. – The operator of a highway vehicle that uses motor fuel that is
8 taxable under this section is liable for the tax. If the highway vehicle that uses the fuel is
9 owned by or leased to a motor carrier, the motor carrier is jointly and severally liable for
10 the tax. If the end seller of motor fuel taxable under this section knew or had reason to
11 know that the motor fuel would be used for a purpose that is taxable under this section,
12 the end seller is jointly and severally liable for the tax. If the Secretary determines that
13 a bulk-end user or retailer used or sold untaxed dyed diesel fuel to operate a highway
14 vehicle when the fuel is dispensed from a storage facility or through a meter marked for
15 nonhighway use, all fuel delivered into that storage facility is presumed to have been
16 used to operate a highway vehicle."

17 Section 6. G.S. 105-449.88 reads as rewritten:

18 **"§ 105-449.88. Exemptions from the excise tax.**

19 The excise tax on motor fuel does not apply to the following:

- 20 (1) Motor fuel removed, by transport truck or another means of transfer
21 outside the terminal transfer system, from a terminal for export, if the
22 supplier of the motor fuel collects tax on it at the rate of the motor
23 fuel's destination state.
- 24 (2) Motor fuel sold to the federal government.
- 25 (3) Motor fuel sold to the State for its use.
- 26 (4) Motor fuel sold to a local board of education for use in the public
27 school system.
- 28 (5) Diesel that is kerosene and is sold to an airport."

29 Section 7. G.S. 105-449.94 is amended by adding the following new
30 subsection to read:

31 "(e) Liability. – A licensed distributor or a licensed importer that deducts an
32 exempt sale when paying tax to a supplier and does not report the sale by filing the
33 return required by this section is liable for a penalty. The penalty is the amount of tax
34 that would have been payable on the sale of the fuel if the distributor or importer had
35 not claimed the sale as an exempt sale."

36 Section 8. Part 5 of Article 36C of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes is
37 amended by adding a new section to read:

38 **"§ 105-449.105A. Monthly refunds for kerosene.**

39 A distributor who sells kerosene to any of the following may obtain a refund for the
40 excise tax the distributor paid on the kerosene during the preceding month, less the
41 amount of any discount allowed on the kerosene under G.S. 105-449.93:

- 42 (1) The end user of the kerosene, if the distributor dispenses the kerosene
43 into a storage facility of the end user that contains fuel used only for
44 heating.

(2) A retailer of kerosene, if the distributor dispenses the kerosene into a storage facility that is marked for nonhighway use in accordance with the requirements in G.S. 105-449.123(a)(1) through (a)(3) and has a dispensing device that is not suitable for use in fueling a highway vehicle."

Section 9. G.S. 105-164.13(11)a. reads as rewritten:

"a. Motor fuel, as defined in G.S. 105-449.60, except motor fuel for which a refund of the per gallon excise tax is allowed under G.S. 105-449.105(c) or ~~(d)~~-(d), under G.S. 105-449.105A, or under G.S. 105-449.107."

Section 10. G.S. 105-449.108 reads as rewritten:

"§ 105-449.108. When an application for a refund is due.

(a) ~~Annual Refunds.—An application for an annual refund of excise tax is due by April 15 following the end of the calendar year for which the refund is claimed. The application must state whether or not the applicant has filed a North Carolina income tax return for the preceding taxable year, and must state that the applicant has paid for the fuel for which a refund is claimed or that payment for the fuel has been secured to the seller's satisfaction.~~ Due Dates. — The due dates of applications for refunds are as follows:

| <u>Refund Period</u> | <u>Due Date</u> |
|-------------------------|---|
| <u>Annual</u> | <u>April 15 after the end of the year</u> |
| <u>Quarterly</u> | <u>Last day of the month after the end of the quarter</u> |
| <u>Monthly</u> | <u>22nd day after the end of the month</u> |
| <u>Upon Application</u> | <u>Last day of month after month in which tax was paid or the event occurred that is the basis of the refund.</u> |

(b) ~~Quarterly Refunds.—An application for a quarterly refund of excise tax is due by the last day of the month following the end of the calendar quarter for which the refund is claimed. The application must state that the applicant has paid for the fuel for which a refund is claimed or that payment for the fuel has been secured to the seller's satisfaction.~~ Requirements. — An application for an annual refund must state whether or not the applicant has filed a North Carolina income tax return for the preceding taxable year. An application for a refund allowed under this Part must state that the applicant has paid for the fuel for which a refund is claimed or that payment for the fuel has been secured to the seller's satisfaction.

(c) ~~Upon Application.—An application for a refund of excise tax upon application under G.S. 105-449.105 is due by the last day of the month that follows the payment of tax or other event that is the basis of the refund."~~

Section 11. G.S. 105-449.132 reads as rewritten:

"§ 105-449.132. How to apply for a license.

To obtain a license, an applicant must file an application with the Secretary on a form provided by the Secretary. An application must include the applicant's name, address, federal employer identification number, and any other information required by

1 the Secretary. An applicant must meet the requirements for obtaining a license set out
2 in G.S. 105-449.69(b)."

3 Section 12. The following persons who have kerosene that is on hand or in
4 their possession as of 12:01 a.m. on July 1, 1998, and is not in the terminal transfer
5 system must inventory the kerosene, report the results of the inventory to the Secretary
6 of Revenue, and pay tax on the kerosene at the motor fuel rate:

7 (1) Retailers who maintain storage facilities for kerosene of at least 2,000
8 gallons.

9 (2) Distributors.

10 (3) Importers.

11 (4) Suppliers.

12 The amount of kerosene in dead storage is not considered to be part of inventory and
13 shall not be included in the report. "Dead storage" is the amount of kerosene in a
14 storage tank that will not be pumped out of the tank because the kerosene is below the
15 mouth of the draw pipe. For a storage tank with a capacity of less than 2,000 gallons,
16 the amount of kerosene in dead storage is considered to be 200 gallons. For a storage
17 tank with a capacity of 2,000 gallons or more, the amount of kerosene in dead storage is
18 considered to be 400 gallons. The report of inventory must be made on a form provided
19 by the Secretary. The report is due by July 15, 1998.

20 Section 13. The change made in Section 1 of this act applies to credits
21 generated from reports filed by motor carriers for the reporting period beginning July 1,
22 1998. The changes made in Sections 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10 become effective July 1, 1998.
23 The remaining sections of this act are effective when they become law.