

AN ACT

To amend sections 5743.01, 5743.51, 5743.53, 5743.63, and 5743.64 and to enact sections 9.681 and 5743.06 of the Revised Code regarding the deduction and recovery of bad debts for cigarette and tobacco and vapor products taxes, the taxation of certain vapor product manufacturers and importers, and local regulation of tobacco products and alternative nicotine products.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio:

SECTION 1. That sections 5743.01, 5743.51, 5743.53, 5743.63, and 5743.64 be amended and sections 9.681 and 5743.06 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as follows:

Sec. 9.681. (A) As used in this section, "tobacco product" and "alternative nicotine product" have the same meanings as in section 2927.02 of the Revised Code.

(B) The regulation of tobacco products and alternative nicotine products is a matter of general statewide concern that requires statewide regulation. The state has adopted a comprehensive plan with respect to all aspects of the giveaway, sale, purchase, distribution, manufacture, use, possession, licensing, taxation, inspection, and marketing of tobacco products and alternative nicotine products. No political subdivision may enact, adopt, renew, maintain, enforce, or continue in existence any charter provision, ordinance, resolution, rule, or other measure that conflicts with or preempts any policy of the state regarding the regulation of tobacco products or alternative nicotine products, including, without limitation, by:

(1) Setting or imposing standards, requirements, taxes, fees, assessments, or charges of any kind regarding tobacco products or alternative nicotine products that are the same as or similar to, that conflict with, that are different from, or that are in addition to, any standard, requirement, tax, fee, assessment, or other charge established or authorized by state law;

(2) Lowering or raising an age requirement provided for in state law in connection with the giveaway, sale, purchase, distribution, manufacture, use, possession, licensing, taxation, inspection, and marketing of tobacco products or alternative nicotine products;

(3) Prohibiting an employee eighteen years of age or older of a manufacturer, producer, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer of tobacco products or alternative nicotine products from selling tobacco products or alternative nicotine products;

(4) Prohibiting an employee eighteen years of age or older of a manufacturer, producer, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer of tobacco products or alternative nicotine products from handling tobacco products or alternative nicotine products in sealed containers in connection with manufacturing, storage, warehousing, placement, stocking, bagging, loading, or unloading.

(C) In addition to any other relief provided, the court shall award costs and reasonable attorney fees to any person, group, or entity that prevails in a challenge to an ordinance, resolution,

regulation, local law, or other action as being in conflict with this section.

(D) The general assembly finds and declares that this section is part of a statewide and comprehensive legislative enactment regulating all aspects of the giveaway, sale, purchase, distribution, manufacture, use, possession, licensing, taxation, inspection, and marketing of tobacco products and alternative nicotine products. The general assembly further finds and declares that the imposition of tobacco product and alternative nicotine product regulation by any political subdivision is a matter of statewide concern and would be inconsistent with that statewide, comprehensive enactment. Therefore, regulation of the giveaway, sale, purchase, distribution, manufacture, use, possession, licensing, taxation, inspection, and marketing of tobacco products and alternative nicotine products is a matter of general statewide concern that requires uniform statewide regulation. By the enactment of this section, it is the intent of the general assembly to preempt political subdivisions from the regulation of tobacco products and alternative nicotine products.

(E) This section does not prohibit a political subdivision from levying a tax expressly authorized by state law, including the taxes authorized under Chapters 5739. and 5741. or sections 5743.021, 5743.024, 5743.026, 5743.321, 5743.323, and 5743.324 of the Revised Code.

Sec. 5743.01. As used in this chapter:

(A) "Person" includes individuals, firms, partnerships, associations, joint-stock companies, corporations, combinations of individuals of any form, and the state and any of its political subdivisions.

(B) "Wholesale dealer" includes only those persons:

(1) Who bring in or cause to be brought into this state unstamped cigarettes purchased directly from the manufacturer, producer, or importer of cigarettes for sale in this state but does not include persons who bring in or cause to be brought into this state cigarettes with respect to which no evidence of tax payment is required thereon as provided in section 5743.04 of the Revised Code; or

(2) Who are engaged in the business of selling cigarettes, tobacco products, or vapor products to others for the purpose of resale.

"Wholesale dealer" does not include any cigarette manufacturer, export warehouse proprietor, or importer with a valid permit under 26 U.S.C. 5713 if that person sells cigarettes in this state only to wholesale dealers holding valid and current licenses under section 5743.15 of the Revised Code or to an export warehouse proprietor or another manufacturer.

(C) "Retail dealer" includes:

(1) In reference to dealers in cigarettes, every person other than a wholesale dealer engaged in the business of selling cigarettes in this state, regardless of whether the person is located in this state or elsewhere, and regardless of quantity, amount, or number of sales;

(2) In reference to dealers in tobacco products, any person in this state engaged in the business of selling tobacco products to ultimate consumers in this state, regardless of quantity, amount, or number of sales;

(3) In reference to dealers in vapor products, any person in this state engaged in the business of selling vapor products to ultimate consumers in this state, regardless of quantity, amount, or number of sales.

(D) "Sale" includes exchange, barter, gift, offer for sale, and distribution, and includes transactions in interstate or foreign commerce.

(E) "Cigarettes" includes any roll for smoking made wholly or in part of tobacco, irrespective of size or shape, and whether or not such tobacco is flavored, adulterated, or mixed with any other ingredient, the wrapper or cover of which is made of paper, reconstituted cigarette tobacco, homogenized cigarette tobacco, cigarette tobacco sheet, or any similar materials other than cigar tobacco.

(F) "Package" means the individual package, box, or other container in or from which retail sales of cigarettes are normally made or intended to be made.

(G) "Storage" includes any keeping or retention of cigarettes, tobacco products, or vapor products for use or consumption in this state.

(H) "Use" includes the exercise of any right or power incidental to the ownership of cigarettes, tobacco products, or vapor products.

(I) "Tobacco product" or "other tobacco product" means any product made from tobacco, other than cigarettes, that is made for smoking or chewing, or both, and snuff.

(J) "Wholesale price" means the invoice price, including all federal excise taxes, at which the manufacturer of the tobacco product sells the tobacco product to unaffiliated distributors, excluding any discounts based on the method of payment of the invoice or on time of payment of the invoice. If the taxpayer buys from other than a manufacturer, "wholesale price" means the invoice price, including all federal excise taxes and excluding any discounts based on the method of payment of the invoice or on time of payment of the invoice.

(K) "Distributor" means:

(1) Any manufacturer who sells, barter, exchanges, or distributes tobacco products to a retail dealer in the state, except when selling to a retail dealer that has filed with the manufacturer a signed statement agreeing to pay and be liable for the tax imposed by section 5743.51 of the Revised Code;

(2) Any wholesale dealer located in the state who receives tobacco products from a manufacturer, or who receives tobacco products on which the tax imposed by this chapter has not been paid;

(3) Any wholesale dealer located outside the state who sells, barter, exchanges, or distributes tobacco products to a wholesale or retail dealer in the state; or

(4) Any retail dealer who receives tobacco products on which the tax has not or will not be paid by another distributor, including a retail dealer that has filed a signed statement with a manufacturer in which the retail dealer agrees to pay and be liable for the tax that would otherwise be imposed on the manufacturer by section 5743.51 of the Revised Code.

(L) "Taxpayer" means any person liable for the tax imposed by section 5743.51, 5743.62, or 5743.63 of the Revised Code.

(M) "Seller" means any person located outside this state engaged in the business of selling tobacco products or vapor products to consumers for storage, use, or other consumption in this state.

(N) "Manufacturer" means any person who manufactures and sells cigarettes, tobacco products, or vapor products.

(O) "Importer" means any person that is authorized, under a valid permit issued under Section 5713 of the Internal Revenue Code, to import finished cigarettes into the United States, either directly or indirectly.

(P) "Little cigar" means any roll for smoking, other than cigarettes, made wholly or in part of

tobacco that uses an integrated cellulose acetate filter or other filter and is wrapped in any substance containing tobacco, other than natural leaf tobacco.

(Q) "Premium cigar" means any roll for smoking, other than cigarettes and little cigars, that is made wholly or in part of tobacco and that has all of the following characteristics:

(1) The binder and wrapper of the roll consist entirely of leaf tobacco.

(2) The roll contains no filter or tip, nor any mouthpiece consisting of a material other than tobacco.

(3) The weight of one thousand such rolls is at least six pounds.

(R) "Maximum tax amount" means fifty cents plus the tax adjustment factor computed under this division.

In April of each year beginning in 2018, the tax commissioner shall compute a tax adjustment factor by multiplying fifty cents by the cumulative percentage increase in the consumer price index (all items, all urban consumers) prepared by the bureau of labor statistics of the United States department of labor from January 1, 2017, to the last day of December of the preceding year and rounding the resulting product to the nearest one cent; provided, that the tax adjustment factor for any year shall not be less than that for the immediately preceding year. The maximum tax amount resulting from the computation of the tax adjustment factor applies on and after the ensuing first day of July through the thirtieth day of June thereafter.

(S) "Secondary manufacturer" means any person in this state engaged in the business of repackaging, reconstituting, diluting, or reprocessing a vapor product for resale to consumers.

(T) "Vapor product" means any liquid solution or other substance that (1) contains nicotine and (2) is depleted as it is used in an electronic smoking product. "Vapor product" does not include any solution or substance regulated as a drug, device, or combination product under Chapter V of the "Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act," 21 U.S.C. 301, et seq.

(U) "Electronic smoking product" means any noncombustible product, other than a cigarette or tobacco product, that (1) contains or is designed to use vapor products and (2) employs a heating element, power source, electronic circuit, or other electronic, chemical, or mechanical means, regardless of shape or size, that can be used to produce vapor from the vapor product. "Electronic smoking product" includes, but is not limited to, an electronic cigarette, electronic cigar, electronic cigarillo, electronic pipe, electronic hookah, vape pen, vaporizer, or similar product or device, but does not include any product regulated as a drug, device, or combination product under Chapter V of the "Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act," 21 U.S.C. 301, et seq.

(V) "Vapor distributor" means any person that:

(1) Sells vapor products to a retail dealer;

(2) Is a retail dealer that receives vapor products with respect to which the tax imposed by this chapter has not or will not be paid by another person that is a vapor distributor;

(3) Is a secondary manufacturer;

(4) Is a wholesale dealer located in this state that receives vapor products from a manufacturer, or receives vapor products on which the tax imposed by this chapter has not been paid;

(5) Is a wholesale dealer located outside this state that sells vapor products to a wholesale dealer in this state.

"Vapor distributor" does not include a qualifying vapor manufacturer or importer.

(W) "Vapor volume" means one of the following, as applicable:

- (1) If a vapor product is sold in liquid form, one-tenth of one milliliter of vapor product;
- (2) If the vapor product is sold in a nonliquid form, one-tenth of one gram of vapor product.

(X) "Qualifying vapor manufacturer or importer" means a manufacturer or importer of vapor products that meets all of the following criteria:

(1) The person is validly registered with the federal bureau of alcohol, tobacco, firearms, and explosives pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 376 and with the tax commissioner under section 5743.66 of the Revised Code.

(2) The person sells vapor products only to vapor distributors holding valid and current licenses under section 5743.61 of the Revised Code and to persons outside of this state.

Sec. 5743.06. (A) As used in this section, "bad debt" means any debt that arises from the sale by a wholesale dealer of cigarettes properly stamped under section 5743.03, 5743.031, or 5743.04 of the Revised Code, that has become worthless or uncollectible, that has been uncollected for at least six months, and that may be claimed as a deduction pursuant to the "Internal Revenue Code of 1954," 26 U.S.C. 166, and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, or that could be claimed as such a deduction if the wholesale dealer kept accounts on an accrual basis. "Bad debt" does not include any interest or financing charges on the debt, expenses incurred in attempting to collect the debt or for any portion of the debt recovered, any accounts receivable that have been sold or assigned to a third party, or repossessed property.

(B) A wholesale dealer may apply to the tax commissioner for a refund of the value of cigarette tax stamps, less any discounts provided under section 5743.05 of the Revised Code, that are part of bad debt of the dealer. The commissioner shall not refund any amount for bad debt under this section unless the dealer has charged off the bad debt on its books as uncollectible. If a purchaser or other person pays all or part of a bad debt with respect to which a wholesale dealer received a refund under this section, the dealer is liable for the prorated amount of taxes refunded in connection with that portion of the debt for which such payment was received and shall remit such taxes to the commissioner in the manner the commissioner prescribes. Any request for refund under this section shall be supported by such evidence the commissioner requires, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

- (1) A copy of the original invoice;
- (2) Evidence that the cigarettes described in the invoice were delivered to the person that ordered them;
- (3) Evidence that the person who ordered and received such cigarettes did not pay the wholesale dealer for the cigarettes and that the dealer used reasonable collection practices in attempting to collect the debt.

(C) A request for refund under this section shall be filed within three years after the date the bad debt became uncollectible. For each request, the commissioner shall determine the amount of refund to which the applicant is entitled. If the amount is not less than that claimed, the commissioner shall certify the amount to the director of budget and management and treasurer of state for payment from the tax refund fund created by section 5703.052 of the Revised Code. If the amount is less than that claimed, the commissioner shall proceed in accordance with section 5703.70 of the Revised Code.

(D) The commissioner may adopt any rules necessary to administer this section.

(E) No person other than the wholesaler that purchased the tax stamps and generated the bad debt may claim the refund authorized under this section.

Sec. 5743.51. (A) To provide revenue for the general revenue fund of the state, an excise tax on tobacco products and vapor products is hereby levied at one of the following rates:

(1) For tobacco products other than little cigars or premium cigars, seventeen per cent of the wholesale price of the tobacco product received by a distributor or sold by a manufacturer to a retail dealer located in this state.

(2) Thirty-seven per cent of the wholesale price of little cigars received by a distributor or sold by a manufacturer to a retail dealer located in this state.

(3) For premium cigars received by a distributor or sold by a manufacturer to a retail dealer located in this state, the lesser of seventeen per cent of the wholesale price of such premium cigars or the maximum tax amount per each such premium cigar.

(4) For vapor products, one cent multiplied by the vapor volume of vapor products the first time the products are received by a vapor distributor in this state.

Each distributor or vapor distributor who brings tobacco products or vapor products, or causes tobacco products or vapor products to be brought, into this state for distribution within this state, or any out-of-state distributor or vapor distributor who sells tobacco products or vapor products to wholesale or retail dealers located in this state for resale by those wholesale or retail dealers is liable for the tax imposed by this section. Only one sale of the same article shall be used in computing the amount of the tax due. If a vapor product is repackaged, reconstituted, diluted, or reprocessed, the subsequent sale of that vapor product shall be considered another sale of the same article for purposes of computing the amount of tax due.

(B) The treasurer of state shall place to the credit of the tax refund fund created by section 5703.052 of the Revised Code, out of the receipts from the tax levied by this section, amounts equal to the refunds certified by the tax commissioner pursuant to section 5743.53 of the Revised Code. The balance of the taxes collected under this section shall be paid into the general revenue fund.

(C) The commissioner may adopt rules as are necessary to assist in the enforcement and administration of sections 5743.51 to 5743.66 of the Revised Code, including rules providing for the remission of penalties imposed.

(D) A manufacturer is not liable for payment of the tax imposed by this section for sales of tobacco products or vapor products to a retail dealer that has filed a signed statement with the manufacturer in which the retail dealer agrees to pay and be liable for the tax, as long as the manufacturer has provided a copy of the statement to the tax commissioner.

(E) A qualifying vapor manufacturer or importer may agree to be liable for the tax imposed by this section with respect to sales of vapor products to a vapor distributor, provided that the manufacturer or importer has filed a signed statement with the vapor distributor in which the manufacturer or importer agrees to pay and be liable for the tax, and provided that the manufacturer or importer has provided a copy of the statement to the tax commissioner.

Sec. 5743.53. (A) The treasurer of state shall refund to a taxpayer any of the following:

(1) Any tobacco products or vapor products tax paid erroneously;

(2) Any tobacco products or vapor products tax paid on an illegal or erroneous assessment;

(3) Any tax paid on tobacco products or vapor products that have been sold or shipped to retail dealers, wholesale dealers, or vapor distributors outside this state, returned to the manufacturer, or destroyed by the taxpayer with the prior approval of the tax commissioner;

(4) In accordance with division (E) of this section, any tax paid by a distributor or vapor distributor on tobacco or vapor products, less any discounts provided under section 5743.52 of the Revised Code, that are part of bad debt of the distributor or vapor distributor.

Any application for refund shall be filed with the commissioner on a form prescribed by the commissioner for that purpose. The commissioner may not pay any refund on an application for refund filed with the commissioner more than three years from the date of payment of the tax.

(B) On the filing of the application for refund, the commissioner shall determine the amount of the refund to which the applicant is entitled. If the amount is not less than that claimed, the commissioner shall certify the amount to the director of budget and management and to the treasurer of state for payment from the tax refund fund created by section 5703.052 of the Revised Code. If the amount is less than that claimed, the commissioner shall proceed in accordance with section 5703.70 of the Revised Code.

If a refund is granted for payment of an illegal or erroneous assessment issued by the department of taxation, the refund shall include interest on the amount of the refund from the date of the overpayment. The interest shall be computed at the rate per annum in the manner prescribed by section 5703.47 of the Revised Code.

(C) If any person entitled to a refund of tax under this section or section 5703.70 of the Revised Code is indebted to the state for any tax administered by the tax commissioner, or any charge, penalties, or interest arising from such tax, the amount allowable on the application for refund first shall be applied in satisfaction of the debt.

(D) In lieu of granting a refund payable under division (A)(3) of this section, the tax commissioner may allow a taxpayer to claim a credit of the amount of refundable tax on the return for the period during which the tax became refundable. The commissioner may require taxpayers to submit any information necessary to support a claim for a credit under this section, and the commissioner shall allow no credit if that information is not provided.

(E)(1) As used in this section, "bad debt" means any debt that arises from the sale by a distributor or vapor distributor of tobacco or vapor products for which the distributor or vapor distributor remitted the tax due under section 5743.51 of the Revised Code, that has become worthless or uncollectible, that has been uncollected for at least six months, and that may be claimed as a deduction pursuant to the "Internal Revenue Code of 1954," 26 U.S.C. 166, and regulations adopted pursuant thereto, or that could be claimed as such a deduction if the distributor or vapor distributor kept account on an accrual basis. "Bad debt" does not include any interest or financing charges on the debt, expenses incurred in attempting to collect the debt or for any portion of the debt recovered, any accounts receivable that have been sold or assigned to a third party, or repossessed property.

(2) The commissioner shall not refund any amount for bad debt under division (A)(4) of this section unless the distributor or vapor distributor has charged off the bad debt on its books as uncollectible. If a purchaser or other person pays all or part of a bad debt with respect to which a distributor or vapor distributor received a refund under this section, the distributor or vapor

distributor is liable for the prorated amount of taxes refunded in connection with that portion of the debt for which such payment was received and shall remit such taxes to the commissioner in the manner the commissioner prescribes. Any request for refund under division (A)(4) of this section shall be supported by such evidence the commissioner requires, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(a) A copy of the original invoice;

(b) Evidence that the tobacco or vapor products described in the invoice were delivered to the person that ordered them;

(c) Evidence that the person who ordered and received such tobacco or vapor products did not pay the distributor or vapor distributor for the tobacco or vapor products and that the distributor or vapor distributor used reasonable collection practices in attempting to collect the debt;

(d) Evidence of the wholesale price or vapor volume, as applicable to the product, at the time the product was subjected to the tax imposed under section 5743.51 of the Revised Code.

(3) No person other than the distributor or vapor distributor that paid the tax imposed under section 5743.51 of the Revised Code to the state and generated the bad debt may claim the bad debt refund authorized under division (E) of this section.

(F) The commissioner may adopt any rules necessary to administer this section.

Sec. 5743.63. (A) To provide revenue for the general revenue fund of the state, an excise tax is hereby levied on the storage, use, or other consumption of tobacco products or vapor products at one of the following rates:

(1) For tobacco products other than little cigars or premium cigars, seventeen per cent of the wholesale price of the tobacco product.

(2) For little cigars, thirty-seven per cent of the wholesale price of the little cigars.

(3) For premium cigars, the lesser of seventeen per cent of the wholesale price of the premium cigars or the maximum tax amount per each premium cigar.

(4) For vapor products, one cent multiplied by the vapor volume of the vapor products.

The tax levied under division (A) of this section is imposed only if the tax has not been paid by the seller as provided in section 5743.62 of the Revised Code, or by the distributor ~~or~~ vapor distributor, or qualifying vapor manufacturer or importer as provided in section 5743.51 of the Revised Code.

(B) Each person subject to the tax levied by this section, on or before the twenty-third day of each month, shall file with the tax commissioner a return for the preceding month showing any information the commissioner finds necessary for the proper administration of sections 5743.51 to 5743.66 of the Revised Code, together with remittance of the tax due, payable to the treasurer of state. The return and payment of the tax required by this section shall be filed in such a manner that it is received by the commissioner on or before the twenty-third day of the month following the reporting period.

(C) The tax commissioner shall immediately forward to the treasurer of state all money received from the tax levied by this section, and the treasurer shall credit the amount to the general revenue fund.

(D) The tax imposed under this section shall not be imposed on vapor products held by a qualifying vapor manufacturer or importer for sale to persons outside of this state.

Sec. 5743.64. No person shall transport within this state tobacco products that have a wholesale value in excess of three hundred dollars, or vapor products with a vapor volume in excess of five hundred milliliters or five hundred grams, as applicable, unless the person has obtained consent to transport the tobacco products or vapor products from the tax commissioner prior to transportation. The consent is not required if the applicable tax levied under section 5743.51, 5743.62, or 5743.63 of the Revised Code has been paid or will be paid by the distributor, vapor distributor, or seller. The consent is also not required when a qualifying vapor manufacturer or importer transfers vapor products into this state. Application for the consent shall be in the form prescribed by the commissioner.

Every person transporting tobacco products or vapor products with the department's consent shall have the consent with the person while transporting or possessing the tobacco products or vapor products within this state and shall produce the consent upon request of any law enforcement officer or authorized agent of the tax commissioner.

Any person transporting tobacco products or vapor products without the consent required by this section shall be subject to the provisions of sections 5743.51 to 5743.66 of the Revised Code, including the tax imposed by section 5743.51, 5743.62, or 5743.63 of the Revised Code.

SECTION 2. That existing sections 5743.01, 5743.51, 5743.53, 5743.63, and 5743.64 of the Revised Code are hereby repealed.

SECTION 3. The amendments by this act to sections 5743.06 and 5743.53 of the Revised Code apply to bad debts charged off as uncollectible on the books and records of a wholesale dealer, distributor, or vapor distributor on or after January 1, 2023.

Speaker _____ *of the House of Representatives.*

President _____ *of the Senate.*

Passed _____, 20____

Approved _____, 20____

Governor.

The section numbering of law of a general and permanent nature is complete and in conformity with the Revised Code.

Director, Legislative Service Commission.

Filed in the office of the Secretary of State at Columbus, Ohio, on the ____ day of _____, A. D. 20 ____.

Secretary of State.

File No. _____ Effective Date _____