

Public Finance Handbook Including 2006 Legislative Amendments

TAX ABATEMENT

The Tax Abatement Act expands its authority and provides rules for the qualification and inclusion of utility properties.



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SECTION 3 - TAX ABATEMENT

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This table of contents is not part of the Tax Abatement Act and is only for convenience of reference.

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TAX ABATEMENT

469.1812 Definitions.

Subdivision 1. Scope. For purposes of sections 469.1812 to 469.1815, the following terms have the meanings given.

Subd. 2. Governing body. "Governing body" means, for a city, the city council; for a school district, the school board; for a county, the county board; and for a town, the board of supervisors.

Subd. 3. Municipality. "Municipality" means a statutory or home rule charter city or a town.

Subd. 4. Political subdivision or subdivision. "Political subdivision" or "subdivision" means a statutory or home rule charter city, town, school district, or county.

469.1813 Abatement authority.

Subdivision 1. Authority. The governing body of a political subdivision may grant a current or prospective abatement, by contract or otherwise, of the taxes imposed by the political subdivision on a parcel of property, which may include personal property and machinery, or defer the payments of the taxes and abate the interest and penalty that otherwise would apply, if:

(1) it expects the benefits to the political subdivision of the proposed abatement agreement to at least equal the costs to the political subdivision of the proposed agreement or intends the abatement to phase in a property tax increase, as provided in clause (b)(7); and

(2) it finds that doing so is in the public interest because it will:

(i) increase or preserve tax base;

(ii) provide employment opportunities in the political subdivision;

(iii) provide or help acquire or construct public facilities;

(iv) help redevelop or renew blighted areas;

(v) help provide access to services for residents of the political subdivision;

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(vi) finance or provide public infrastructure;

(vii) phase in a property tax increase on the parcel resulting from an increase of 50 percent or more in one year on the estimated market value of the parcel, other than increase attributable to improvement of the parcel; or

(viii) stabilize the tax base through equalization of property tax revenues for a specified period of time with respect to a taxpayer whose real and personal property is subject to valuation under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8100.

Subd. 1a. Use of term. As used in this section and sections 469.1814 and 469.1815, "abatement" includes a deferral of taxes with abatement of interest and penalties unless the context indicates otherwise.

Subd. 2. Abatement resolution. (a) The governing body of a political subdivision may grant an abatement only by adopting an abatement resolution, specifying the terms of the abatement. In the case of a town, the board of supervisors may approve the abatement resolution. The resolution must also include a specific statement as to the nature and extent of the public benefits which the governing body expects to result from the agreement. The resolution may provide that the political subdivision will retain or transfer to another political subdivision the abatement to pay for all or part of the cost of acquisition or improvement of public infrastructure, whether or not located on or adjacent to the parcel for which the tax is abated. The abatement may reduce all or part of the property tax amount for the political subdivision on the parcel. A political subdivision's maximum annual amount for a parcel equals its total local tax rate multiplied by the total net tax capacity of the parcel.

(b) The political subdivision may limit the abatement:

(1) to a specific dollar amount per year or in total;

(2) to the increase in property taxes resulting from improvement of the property;

(3) to the increases in property taxes resulting from increases in the market value or tax capacity of the property;

(4) in any other manner the governing body of the subdivision determines is appropriate; or

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(5) to the interest and penalty that would otherwise be due on taxes that are deferred.

(c) The political subdivision may not abate tax attributable to the areawide tax under chapter 276A or 473F, except as provided in this subdivision.

Subd. 3. School district abatements. An abatement granted under this section is not an abatement for purposes of state aid or local levy under sections 127A.40 to 127A.51.

Subd. 4. Property located in tax increment financing districts. The governing body of a political subdivision may not enter into a property tax abatement agreement under sections 469.1812 to 469.1815 that provides for abatement of taxes on a parcel, if the abatement will occur while the parcel is located in a tax increment financing district.

Subd. 5. Notice and public hearing. (a) The governing body of the political subdivision may approve an abatement under sections 469.1812 to 469.1815 only after holding a public hearing on the abatement.

(b) Notice of the hearing must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the political subdivision at least once more than ten days but less than 30 days before the hearing. The newspaper must be one of general interest and readership in the community, and not one of limited subject matter. The newspaper must be published at least once per week. The notice must indicate that the governing body will consider granting a property tax abatement, identify the property or properties for which an abatement is under consideration, and the total estimated amount of the abatement.

Subd. 6. Duration limit. (a) A political subdivision may grant an abatement for a period no longer than 15 years, except as provided under paragraph (b). The abatement period commences in the first year in which the abatement granted is either paid or retained in accordance with section 469.1815, subdivision 2. The subdivision may specify in the abatement resolution a shorter duration. If the resolution does not specify a period of time, the abatement is for eight years. If an abatement has been granted to a parcel of property and the period of the abatement has expired, the political subdivision that granted the abatement may not grant another abatement for eight years after the expiration of the first abatement. This prohibition does not apply to improvements added after and not subject to the first abatement. Economic abatement agreements for real and personal property subject to valuation under Minnesota Rules,

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chapter 8100, are not subject to this prohibition and may be granted successively.

(b) A political subdivision proposing to abate taxes for a parcel may request, in writing, that the other political subdivisions in which the parcel is located grant an abatement for the property. If one of the other political subdivisions declines, in writing, to grant an abatement or if 90 days pass after receipt of the request to grant an abatement without a written response from one of the political subdivisions, the duration limit for an abatement for the parcel by the requesting political subdivision and any other participating political subdivision is increased to 20 years. If the political subdivision which declined to grant an abatement later grants an abatement for the parcel, the 20-year duration limit is reduced by one year for each year that the declining political subdivision grants an abatement for the parcel during the period of the abatement granted by the requesting political subdivision. The duration limit may not be reduced below the limit under paragraph (a).

Subd. 6a. Deferment payment schedule. When the tax is deferred and the interest and penalty abated, the political subdivision must set a schedule for repayments. The deferred payment must be included with the current taxes due and payable in the years the deferred payments are due and payable and must be levied accordingly.

Subd. 6b. Extended duration limit. (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 6, a political subdivision may grant an abatement for a period of up to 20 years, if the abatement is for a qualified business.

(b) To be a qualified business for purposes of this subdivision, at least 50 percent of the payroll of the operations of the business that qualify for the abatement must be for employees engaged in one of the following lines of business or any combination of them:

- (1) manufacturing;
- (2) agricultural processing;
- (3) mining;
- (4) research and development;
- (5) warehousing; or
- (6) qualified high technology.

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Alternatively, a qualified business also includes a taxpayer whose real and personal property is subject to valuation under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8100.

(c)(1) "Manufacturing" means the material staging and production of tangible personal property by procedures commonly regarded as manufacturing, processing, fabrication, or assembling which changes some existing material into new shapes, new qualities, or new combinations.

(2) "Mining" has the meaning given in section 613(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(3) "Agricultural processing" means transforming, packaging, sorting, or grading livestock or livestock products, agricultural commodities, or plants or plant products into goods that are used for intermediate or final consumption including goods for nonfood use.

(4) "Research and development" means qualified research as defined in section 41(d) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(5) "Qualified high technology" means one or more of the following activities:

(i) advanced computing, which is any technology used in the design and development of any of the following:

(A) computer hardware and software;

(B) data communications; and

(C) information technologies;

(ii) advanced materials, which are materials with engineered properties created through the development of specialized process and synthesis technology;

(iii) biotechnology, which is any technology that uses living organisms, cells, macromolecules, microorganisms, or substances from living organisms to make or modify a product, improve plants or animals, or develop microorganisms for useful purposes;

(iv) electronic device technology, which is any technology that involves microelectronics, semiconductors, electronic equipment, and instrumentation, radio frequency, microwave, and millimeter electronics,

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and optical and optic-electrical devices, or data and digital communications and imaging devices;

(v) engineering or laboratory testing related to the development of a product;

(vi) technology that assists in the assessment or prevention of threats or damage to human health or the environment, including, but not limited to, environmental cleanup technology, pollution prevention technology, or development of alternative energy sources;

(vii) medical device technology, which is any technology that involves medical equipment or products other than a pharmaceutical product that has therapeutic or diagnostic value and is regulated; or

(viii) advanced vehicles technology which is any technology that involves electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, or alternative fuel vehicles, or components used in the construction of electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles, or alternative fuel vehicles. An electric vehicle is a road vehicle that draws

propulsion energy only from an on-board source of electrical energy. A hybrid vehicle is a road vehicle that can draw propulsion energy from both a consumable fuel and a rechargeable energy storage system.

(d) The authority to grant new abatements under this subdivision expires on July 1, 2004, except that the authority to grant new abatements for real and personal property subject to valuation under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8100, does not expire.

Subd. 7. Review and modification of abatements. The political subdivision may provide in the abatement resolution that the abatement may not be modified or changed during its term. If the abatement resolution does not provide that the abatement may not be modified or changed, the governing body of the political subdivision may review and modify the abatement every second year after it was approved.

Subd. 8. Limitation on abatements. In any year, the total amount of property taxes abated by a political subdivision under this section may not exceed (1) ten percent of the current levy, or (2) \$200,000, whichever is greater. The limit under this subdivision does not apply to:

(1) an uncollected abatement from a prior year that is added to the abatement levy; or

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(2) a taxpayer whose real and personal property is subject to valuation under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8100.

Subd. 9. Consent of property owner not required. A political subdivision may abate the taxes on a parcel under sections 469.1812 to 469.1815 without obtaining the consent of the property owner. This subdivision does not apply to abatements granted to a taxpayer whose real and personal property is valued under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8100.

Subd. 10. Applicability to utility properties. When this statute is applied or utilized with respect to a taxpayer whose real and personal property is subject to valuation under Minnesota Rules, chapter 8100, the provisions of this section and sections 469.1814 and 469.1815 shall apply only to property specified or described in the abatement contract or agreement.

469.1814 Bonding authority.

Subdivision 1. Authority. A political subdivision may issue bonds or other obligations to provide an amount equal to the sum of the abatements granted for a property under section 469.1813. The maximum principal amount of these bonds may not exceed the estimated sum of the abatements for the property for the years authorized. The bonds may be general obligations of the political subdivision if the governing body of the political subdivision elects to pledge the full faith and credit of the subdivision in the resolution issuing the bonds.

Subd. 2. Chapter 475 applies. Chapter 475 applies to the obligations authorized by this section, except bonds are excluded from the calculation of the net debt limit.

Subd. 3. Municipal issue for combined abatements. If two or more political subdivisions decide to grant abatements for the same property, the municipality in which the property is located may issue bonds to provide an amount equal to the sum of the abatements for each of the jurisdictions that agrees. The governing body of each of the other jurisdictions must guarantee and pledge to pay annually to the municipality the amount of the abatement. This pledge and guarantee is a binding obligation of the political subdivision and must be included in the abatement resolution.

Subd. 4. Bonded abatements not subject to review. If bonds are issued to provide advance payment of abatements under this section,

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the amount of abatement is not subject to periodic review by the political subdivision under section 469.1813, subdivision 7.

Subd. 5. Use of proceeds. The proceeds of bonds issued under this section may be used to (1) pay for public improvements that benefit the property, (2) to acquire and convey land or other property, as provided under this section, (3) to reimburse the property owner for the cost of improvements made to the property, or (4) to pay the costs of issuance of the bonds.

Subd. 6. Levy to offset tax changes. (a) This subdivision applies only to abatements pledged to pay preexisting obligations.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "preexisting obligation" means a bond or binding contract that:

- (1) was issued or approved before August 1, 2001;
- (2) is secured by abatements approved before August 1, 2001; and
- (3) is not a general obligation.

(c) If a political subdivision granted an abatement pledged to pay a preexisting obligation and if the changes in the property tax class rates enacted in calendar year 2001 reduce the abatement by an amount sufficient to prevent payment in full of the preexisting obligation, the political subdivision may add to its levy under section 469.1815 an amount sufficient to provide an abatement equal to the least of:

- (1) the amount of the abatement using the political subdivision's tax rate for the current year and the class rates for property taxes payable in 2001;
- (2) the amount required to pay the amount due on the preexisting obligation for the year from the political subdivision; or
- (3) the maximum dollar amount of the political subdivision's abatement, if any, under the abatement resolution.

469.1815 Administrative.

Subdivision 1. Inclusion in proposed and final levies. The political subdivision must add to its levy amount for the current year under sections 275.065 and 275.07 the total estimated amount of all current year abatements granted. If all or a portion of an abatement levy for a prior

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year was uncollected, the political subdivision may add the uncollected amount to its abatement levy for the current year. The tax amounts shown on the proposed notice under section 275.065, subdivision 3, and on the property tax statement under section 276.04, subdivision 2, are the total amounts before the reduction of any abatements that will be granted on the property.

Subd. 2. Property taxes; abatement payment. The total property taxes shall be levied on the property and shall be due and payable to the county at the times provided under section 279.01. The political subdivision will pay the abatement to the property owner, lessee, or a representative of the bondholders or will retain the abatement to pay public infrastructure costs, as provided by the abatement resolution.