



EXPEDITED RULE MAKING

CR-105 (December 2017) (Implements RCW 34.05.353)

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FILED

DATE: November 14, 2019

TIME: 5:00 PM

WSR 19-23-058

Agency: Department of Revenue

Title of rule and other identifying information: (describe subject) WAC 458-20-179 Public Utility Tax

Purpose of the proposal and its anticipated effects, including any changes in existing rules: The Department is amending WAC 458-20-179 to reflect 2019 legislation that: 1) provides public utility tax credits to certain businesses participating in an early adoption incentive program (E3SHB 1257); and 2) exempts specified renewable natural gas sales from public utility tax (HB 1070). The Department is also amending WAC 458-20-179 to reflect de-implementation of RCW 82.16.0491 because the right to earn tax credits under that statute expired.

Reasons supporting proposal: This rule is being amended to incorporate legislation from 2019 (E3SHB 1257, HB 1070) and to reflect the expiration of a tax credit under RCW 82.16.0491.

Statutory authority for adoption: RCW 82.32.300 and RCW 82.01.060(2)

Statute being implemented: RCW 82.04.120, RCW 82.04.310, RCW 82.16.185, RCW 82.16.310

Is rule necessary because of a:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Federal Law? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Federal Court Decision? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| State Court Decision? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

If yes, CITATION:

Name of proponent: (person or organization) Department of Revenue

- Private
 Public
 Governmental

Name of agency personnel responsible for:

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Agency comments or recommendations, if any, as to statutory language, implementation, enforcement, and fiscal matters: None

Expedited Adoption - Which of the following criteria was used by the agency to file this notice:

- Relates only to internal governmental operations that are not subject to violation by a person;
- Adopts or incorporates by reference without material change federal statutes or regulations, Washington state statutes, rules of other Washington state agencies, shoreline master programs other than those programs governing shorelines of statewide significance, or, as referenced by Washington state law, national consensus codes that generally establish industry standards, if the material adopted or incorporated regulates the same subject matter and conduct as the adopting or incorporating rule;
- Corrects typographical errors, make address or name changes, or clarify language of a rule without changing its effect;
- Content is explicitly and specifically dictated by statute;
- Have been the subject of negotiated rule making, pilot rule making, or some other process that involved substantial participation by interested parties before the development of the proposed rule; or
- Is being amended after a review under RCW 34.05.328.

Expedited Repeal - Which of the following criteria was used by the agency to file notice:

- The statute on which the rule is based has been repealed and has not been replaced by another statute providing statutory authority for the rule;
- The statute on which the rule is based has been declared unconstitutional by a court with jurisdiction, there is a final judgment, and no statute has been enacted to replace the unconstitutional statute;
- The rule is no longer necessary because of changed circumstances; or
- Other rules of the agency or of another agency govern the same activity as the rule, making the rule redundant.

Explanation of the reason the agency believes the expedited rule-making process is appropriate pursuant to RCW 34.05.353(4): The revisions to the rule follow the wording in corresponding statutory additions and revisions as a result of 2019 legislation. The rule does not contain any new interpretations.

NOTICE

THIS RULE IS BEING PROPOSED UNDER AN EXPEDITED RULE-MAKING PROCESS THAT WILL ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR THE AGENCY TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS, PREPARE A SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT, OR PROVIDE RESPONSES TO THE CRITERIA FOR A SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATIVE RULE. IF YOU OBJECT TO THIS USE OF THE EXPEDITED RULE-MAKING PROCESS, YOU MUST EXPRESS YOUR OBJECTIONS IN WRITING AND THEY MUST BE SENT TO

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AND RECEIVED BY (date) January 21, 2020

Date: November 14, 2019

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AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 18-21-166, filed 10/23/18, effective 11/23/18)

WAC 458-20-179 Public utility tax. Introduction. This rule explains the public utility tax (PUT) imposed by chapter 82.16 RCW. The PUT is a tax for engaging in certain public service and transportation businesses within this state.

The department of revenue (department) has adopted other rules that relate to the application of PUT. Readers may want to refer to rules in the following list:

(1) WAC 458-20-104 Small business tax relief based on income of business;

(2) WAC 458-20-121 Sales of heat or steam—Including production by cogeneration;

(3) WAC 458-20-13501 Timber harvest operations;

(4) WAC 458-20-175 Persons engaged in the business of operating as a private or common carrier by air, rail or water in interstate or foreign commerce;

(5) WAC 458-20-180 Motor carriers;

(6) WAC 458-20-192 Indians—Indian country;

(7) WAC 458-20-193D Transportation, communication, public utility activities, or other services in interstate or foreign commerce; and

(8) WAC 458-20-251 Sewerage collection and other related activities.

This rule contains examples that identify a number of facts and then state a conclusion. The examples should be used only as a general guide. The tax results of other situations must be determined after a review of all of the facts and circumstances.

Part I - General Information

(101) **Persons subject to the public utility tax.** The PUT is imposed by RCW 82.16.020 on certain public service and transportation businesses including railroad, express, railroad car, water distribution, sewerage collection, light and power, telegraph, gas distribution, motor transportation, urban transportation, log transportation, vessels under sixty-five feet in length operating upon the waters within the state of Washington, and tugboat businesses.

(a) **Hauling by watercraft.** Income from hauling persons or property for hire by watercraft between points in Washington is subject to one of two PUT classifications, depending on the nature of the service. Income from:

- Operating tugboats of any size, and the sale of transportation services by vessels sixty-five feet and over, is subject to tax under the "other public service business" PUT classification.

- The sale of transportation services using vessels under sixty-five feet, other than tugboats, is subject to tax under the "vessels under sixty-five feet" public utility tax classification.

These classifications do not include sightseeing tours, fishing charters, or activities that are in the nature of guided tours where the tour may include some water transportation. Persons engaged in providing tours should refer to WAC 458-20-258, Travel agents and tour operators.

(b) **Other businesses subject to the public utility tax.** The PUT also applies to any other public service business subject to control by the state, or having the powers of eminent domain, or any business

declared by the legislature to be of a public service nature, unless the activity is subject to tax under chapter 82.04 RCW, Business and occupation (B&O) tax.

(i) The phrase "subject to control by the state" means control by the utilities and transportation commission or any other state agency required by law to exercise control of a business of a public service nature regarding rates charged or services rendered. Examples of other public service businesses include, but are not limited to: Airplane transportation, boom, dock, ferry, pipeline, toll bridge, water transportation, and wharf businesses. RCW 82.16.010.

(ii) Persons engaged in the same business activities as the businesses described above are subject to the PUT even if they are not publicly recognized as providing that type of service or the amount of income from these activities is not substantial. For example, an industrial manufacturing company that owns and operates a well, and that sells a relatively small amount of water to its wholly owned subsidiary, is subject to the PUT as a water distribution business on its sales of water.

(c) **Are amounts derived from interest and penalties taxable?** Amounts charged to customers as interest or penalties are generally subject to the service and other activities B&O tax. This includes interest charged for failure to timely pay for utility services or for incidental services. Incidental services include for example meter installation or other activities which are performed prior to the customer receiving utility services. Any interest or penalty resulting from the failure to timely pay a local improvement district or utility local improvement district assessment is not subject to public utility or B&O taxes.

(102) **Tax rates and measure of tax.** The rates of tax for each business activity subject to the PUT are imposed under RCW 82.16.020 and set forth on appropriate lines of the state public utility tax addendum for the excise tax return. The measure of the PUT is the gross income of the business. The term "gross income" means the value proceeding or accruing from the performance of the particular public service or transportation business involved, including operations incidental to that business. No deduction may be taken on account of the cost of the commodity furnished or sold, the cost of materials used, labor costs, interest, discounts, delivery costs, taxes, or any other expense whatsoever paid or accrued, nor on account of losses. RCW 82.16.010(3).

(103) **Persons subject to public utility tax may also be subject to B&O tax.** The B&O tax does not apply to any business activities for which PUT is specifically imposed, including amounts derived from activities for which a deduction from the PUT is available under RCW 82.16.050. RCW 82.04.310(1). However, many persons engaged in business activities subject to the PUT are also engaged in other business activities subject to B&O tax.

For example, a gas distribution company operating a system for the distribution of natural gas for sale may also make retail sales of gas appliances. The gas distribution company is subject to the PUT on its distribution of natural gas to consumers. It is also subject to retailing B&O tax and must collect and remit retail sales tax on its retail sales of gas appliances. Repairs of customer owned appliances are also a retailing activity subject to retail sales tax.

In distinguishing gross income taxable under the PUT from gross income taxable under the B&O tax, the department is guided by the uniform system of accounts established for the specific type of utility

concerned. Because of differences in the uniform systems of accounts established for various types of utility businesses, such guides are not controlling for the purposes of classifying revenue under the Revenue Act.

(104) Charges for service connections, line extensions, and other similar services.

(a) For existing customers, amounts derived from services that are incidental to a public utility activity are subject to PUT. Thus, amounts received for the following are subject to PUT:

- (i) Service connection, start-up, and testing fees;
- (ii) Charges for line extensions, repairs, raisings, and/or drops;
- (iii) Meter or pole replacement;
- (iv) Meter reading or load factor charges; and
- (v) Connecting or disconnecting.

(b) For new customers, amounts received for any of the services noted above in Part (104)(a) of this rule are subject to service and other activities B&O tax.

A "new customer" is a customer who previously has not received the utility service at the location. For example, a customer of a water distribution company who currently receives water at a residence and constructs a new residence at a different location is considered a "new customer" with respect to any meter installation services performed at the new residence, until the customer actually receives water at that location. It is immaterial that this customer may be receiving water at the old residence. The charge for installing the meter for this customer at the new location is subject to service and other activities B&O tax.

(105) Contributions of equipment or facilities. Contributions to a utility business in the form of equipment or facilities are not considered income to the utility business, if the contribution is a condition of receiving service.

(a) **Example 1.** An industrial customer purchases and pays sales tax on transformers it installs. The customer then provides the transformers to a public utility district as a condition of receiving future service. The public utility district is not subject to the PUT or B&O tax on the receipt of the transformers. Use tax is not owed by the utility district as the customer paid sales tax at the time of purchase.

(b) **Example 2.** For a water or sewerage collection business, the value of pipe, valves, pumps, or similar items provided by a developer for purposes of servicing the developed area is likewise not subject to PUT or B&O tax.

Part II - Exemptions, Deductions, and Nontaxable Receipts

(201) **Exemptions.** This subsection describes PUT exemptions. Also see subsections in this rule that discuss specific utilities.

(a) **Income exemption.** Persons subject to the PUT are exempt from the payment of the tax if their taxable income from utility activities does not meet a minimum threshold. RCW 82.16.040. For detailed information about this exemption, refer to WAC 458-20-104, Small business tax relief based on income of business.

(b) **Ride sharing.** RCW 82.16.047 exempts amounts received in the course of commuter ride sharing or ride sharing for persons with special transportation needs in accordance with RCW 46.74.010. For detailed information about this exemption, refer to WAC 458-20-261, Commute trip reduction incentives.

(c) **State route number 16.** RCW 82.16.046 exempts amounts received from operating state route number 16 corridor transportation systems and facilities constructed and operated under chapter 47.46 RCW.

(202) **Deductions.** In general, costs of doing business are not deductible under the PUT. However, RCW 82.16.050 provides for limited deductions. This subsection describes a number of those deductions. The deductible amounts should be included in the gross income reported on the state public utility tax addendum for the excise tax return and then deducted on the deduction detail page to determine the amount of taxable income. Deductions taken but not identified on the appropriate deduction detail page may be disallowed. Also see Parts III and IV of this rule, which identify additional deductions available to power and light, gas distribution, and water distribution businesses.

(a) **Cash discounts.** The amount of cash discount actually taken by the purchaser or customer is deductible under RCW 82.16.050(4).

(b) **Credit losses.** The amount of credit losses actually sustained by taxpayers whose regular books of account are kept on an accrual basis is deductible under RCW 82.16.050(5). For additional information regarding credit losses see WAC 458-20-196, Bad debts.

(c) **Taxes.** Amounts derived by municipally owned or operated public service businesses directly from taxes levied for their support are deductible under RCW 82.16.050(1). However, service charges that are spread on the property tax rolls and collected as taxes are not deductible.

Local improvement district and utility local improvement district assessments, including interest and penalties on such assessments, are not income because they are exercises of the jurisdiction's taxing authority. These assessments may be composed of a share of the costs of capital facilities, installation labor, connection fees, etc.

(d) **Prohibitions imposed by federal law or the state or federal constitutions.** Amounts derived from business that the state is prohibited from taxing under federal law or the state or federal constitutions are deductible under RCW 82.16.050(6).

(e) **Sales of commodities for resale.** Amounts derived from the sale of commodities to persons in the same public service business as the seller, for resale within this state, are deductible under RCW 82.16.050(2). This deduction is allowed only with respect to water distribution, gas distribution, or other public service businesses that furnish water, gas, or any other commodity in the performance of a public service business. For example, income from the sale of natural gas by a gas distributing company to natural gas companies located in Washington, who resell the gas to their customers, is deductible from the gas distributing company's gross income.

(f) **Services furnished jointly.** In general, costs of doing business are not deductible under the PUT. However, RCW 82.16.050(3) allows a deduction for amounts actually paid by a taxpayer to another person taxable under the PUT as the latter's portion of the consideration due for services furnished jointly by both, provided the full amount paid by the customer for the service is received by the taxpayer and reported as gross income subject to the PUT. The services must be furnished jointly by both the taxpayer and another person taxable under the PUT.

Example 1. Manufacturing Company hires ABC Transport (ABC) to haul goods from Tacoma to a manufacturing facility in Bellingham. ABC subcontracts part of the haul to XYZ Freight (XYZ) and has XYZ haul the goods from Tacoma to Everett, where the goods are loaded into ABC's truck and transported to Bellingham. Assuming all other require-

ments of the deduction are met, ABC may deduct the payments it makes to XYZ from its gross income as XYZ's portion of the consideration paid by Manufacturing Company for transportation services furnished jointly by both ABC and XYZ. See WAC 458-20-180 for additional information on motor carriers.

Example 2. Dakota Electricity Generator (DEG) sells electricity to Mod Industrial Firm (MIF). DEG hires Wheeler #1 to transmit the electricity from DEG to MIF. Wheeler #1 subcontracts a portion of the transmission service to Wheeler #2.

- Wheeler #1 and Wheeler #2 are jointly furnishing transmission services to DEG. Assuming all other requirements of the deduction are met, Wheeler #1 may claim a "services jointly provided" deduction in the amount paid to Wheeler #2.

- DEG may not claim a "services jointly provided" deduction for the amount DEG paid Wheeler #1. DEG and Wheeler #1 are **not** jointly furnishing a service to MIF. DEG is selling electricity to MIF, and Wheeler #1 is selling transmission services to DEG.

Example 3. City A's water department purchases water from City B's water department. City A sells the water to its customers. City A may not take a deduction for its payment to City B's water department as "services jointly provided." The sale of water by City A to its customers is not a service jointly provided to City A's customers by both City A and City B.

City B, however, may take a deduction under RCW 82.16.050(2) for its sales of water to City A since this is a sale of commodities to a person in the same public service business, for resale within this state.

(203) **Nontaxable amounts.** The following amounts are not considered taxable income.

- (a) **Insurance claim amounts.** Amounts received from insurance companies in payment of losses, which are distinguishable from amounts received to settle contract payment disagreements.

- (b) **Payment of damages.** Amounts received from individuals and others in payment of damages caused by them to the utility's plant or equipment.

- (c) **Amounts from eminent domain proceedings or governmental action.** Amounts received as compensation for compensatory or involuntary taking of facilities of a public utility, by the exercise of eminent domain or governmental action, are considered liquidated damages.

Part III - Light and Power Business

(301) **Light and power business.** Public utility tax is imposed by RCW 82.16.020 on gross income from providing light and power services. Light and power business means the business of operating a plant or system for the generation, production or distribution of electrical energy for hire or sale. RCW 82.16.010.

(302) **Requirements for light and power businesses.** RCW 82.16.090 requires that customer billings issued by light and power businesses serving more than twenty thousand customers include the following information:

- (a) The rates and amounts of taxes paid directly by the customer on products or services rendered by such business; and

- (b) The rate, origin, and approximate amount of each tax levied on the revenue of such business which has been added as a component of the amount charged to the customer. This does not include taxes levied by the federal government or taxes levied under chapters 54.28, 80.24, or 82.04 RCW.

(303) **Wheeling of electricity.** "Wheeling of electricity" is the activity of delivering or distributing electricity owned by others using power lines and equipment of the person doing the wheeling. Income from wheeling electricity is subject to the PUT.

(304) **Exchanges of electricity by light and power businesses.** There is no specific exemption that applies to an "exchange" of electrical energy or its rights. However, exchanges of electrical energy between light and power businesses qualify for deduction in computing the PUT as sales of power to another light and power business for resale. RCW 82.16.050(11). An exchange is a transaction that is considered to be a sale and involves a delivery or transfer of energy or its rights by one party to another for which the second party agrees, subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement, to deliver electrical energy at the same or another time. Examples of deductible exchange transactions include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) The exchange of electric power for electric power between one light and power business and another light and power business;

(b) The transmission of electric power by one light and power business to another light and power business pursuant to the agreement for coordination of operations among power systems of the Pacific Northwest executed as of September 15, 1964;

(c) The acquisition of electric power by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for resale to its Washington customers in the light and power business;

(d) The residential exchange of electric power entered into between a light and power business and the administrator of the BPA pursuant to the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act, P.L. 96-501, Sec. 5(c), 16 U.S.C. Sec. 839c. In some cases, power is not physically transferred, but the purpose of the residential exchange is for BPA to pay a "subsidy" to the exchanging utilities. These subsidies are considered a nontaxable adjustment (rebate or discount) for purchases of power from BPA.

(305) **Exemptions.** The following exemptions are available for sales of electricity, and are in addition to the general exemptions found in Part II of this rule.

(a) **Sales of electricity to an electrolytic processor.** RCW 82.16.0421 provides an exemption for sales of electricity made by light and power businesses to chlor-alkali electrolytic processing businesses or sodium chlorate electrolytic processing businesses for the electrolytic process. This exemption, which is scheduled to expire June 30, 2029, applies to sales of electricity made by December 31, 2028.

The exemption does not apply to amounts received from the remarketing or resale of electricity originally obtained by contract for the electrolytic process.

(i) **Exemption certificate required.** To claim the exemption, the chlor-alkali electrolytic processing business or the sodium chlorate electrolytic processing business must provide the light and power business with an exemption certificate. RCW 82.16.0421. A certificate can be obtained from the department's website at: dor.wa.gov.

(ii) **Annual tax performance report requirement.** RCW 82.16.0421 requires taxpayers receiving the benefit of this tax preference to file an annual tax performance report by May 31st of the year following any calendar year in which a taxpayer becomes eligible to claim the tax preference. See RCW 82.32.534 for more information on the annual tax performance report requirement for tax preferences.

(iii) **Qualification requirements.** To qualify all the following requirements must be met:

(A) The electricity used in the electrolytic process must be separately metered from the electricity used for the general operations of the business;

(B) The price charged for the electricity used in the electrolytic process must be reduced by an amount equal to the tax exemption available to the light and power business; and

(C) Disallowance of all or part of the exemption is a breach of contract and the damages to be paid by the chlor-alkali electrolytic processing business or the sodium chlorate electrolytic processing business is the amount of the tax exemption disallowed.

(b) **Sales of electricity to aluminum smelters.** RCW 82.16.0498 provides an exemption to be taken in the form of a credit. The credit is allowed if the contract for sale of electricity to an aluminum smelter specifies that the price charged for the electricity will be reduced by an amount equal to the credit. The exemption does not apply to amounts received from the remarketing or resale of electricity originally obtained by contract for the smelting process. The credit allowed is the same amount as the utility tax that would otherwise have been due under RCW 82.16.020.

(c) **BPA credits or funds.** Effective June 10, 2010, through June 30, 2015, RCW 82.04.310 exempted from the B&O tax credits or payments received by persons from the BPA, for the purpose of implementing energy conservation programs or demand-side management programs. This exemption expired June 30, 2015, and credits or payments received on or after July 1, 2015, are subject to the B&O tax under the service and other activities classification.

(306) **Deductions.** The following deductions are available for sales of electricity, and are in addition to the general deductions found in Part II of this rule.

(a) **Sales of electricity for resale or for consumption outside Washington.** Amounts derived from the production, sale, or transfer of electrical energy for resale within or outside the state of Washington or for consumption outside the state are deductible under RCW 82.16.050(11). These sales of electricity are also not subject to the manufacturing B&O tax. RCW 82.04.310.

(b) **Low density light and power businesses.** RCW 82.16.053 provides a deduction for light and power businesses having seventeen or fewer customers per mile of distribution power lines with retail power rates that exceed the state average power rate. The statute requires the department to determine the state average electric power rate each year and make this rate available to these businesses. This rate and additional information regarding this deduction can be found on the department's website at: dor.wa.gov.

(c) **Conservation - Electrical energy and gas.** RCW 82.16.055 provides deductions relating to the production or generation of energy from cogeneration or renewable resources, and for measures to improve the efficiency of energy end-use.

(i) **Restrictions.** Use of the deductions is subject to the following restrictions:

(A) They apply only to new facilities for the production or generation of energy from cogeneration or renewable energy resources or measures to improve the efficiency of energy end-use on which construction or installation was begun after June 12, 1980, and before January 1, 1990;

(B) The measures or projects must be, at the time they are placed in service, reasonably expected to save, produce, or generate energy at a total incremental system cost per unit of energy delivered to end-use which is less than or equal to the incremental system cost per unit of energy delivered to end-use from similarly available conventional energy resources that utilize nuclear energy or fossil fuels and that the gas or electric utility could acquire to meet energy demand in the same time period; and

(C) They may be taken for a period not exceeding thirty years after the project is placed in operation. Any recurring costs determined to be eligible for deduction under this rule will cease to be eligible in whole or part at the time of termination of any energy conservation measure or project that originally authorized the deduction under RCW 82.16.055.

(ii) **What can be deducted.** The following may be deducted from a taxpayer's gross income:

(A) Amounts equal to the cost of production at the plant for consumption within the state of Washington of electrical energy produced or generated from cogeneration as defined in RCW 82.08.02565;

(B) Amounts equal to the cost of production at the plant for consumption within the state of Washington of electrical energy or gas produced or generated from renewable energy resources such as solar energy, wind energy, hydroelectric energy, geothermal energy, wood, wood wastes, municipal wastes, agricultural products and wastes, and end-use waste heat;

(C) Amounts expended to improve consumers' efficiency of energy end-use or to otherwise reduce the use of electrical energy or gas by the consumer;

(D) Amounts received by a utility as a contribution for the installation of service, and later refunded to the customer, are deductible from gross income at the time the amounts are refunded;

(E) Production expenses, eligible fuel costs and book depreciation of capital costs. Eligible fuel costs are all fuels if used for cogeneration or nonfossil fuel costs if not a cogeneration facility.

(307) **Credits.** Credit is available to light and power businesses that make ~~((contributions to an electric utility rural economic development revolving fund. The credit is equal to fifty percent of contributions made during a fiscal year to an electric utility rural economic development revolving fund.~~

~~(a) Light and power businesses may take a credit up to twenty-five thousand dollars, not to exceed the PUT that would normally be due, against their public utility tax liability each fiscal year for contributions made.~~

~~(b) Expenditures from the electric utility rural economic development revolving fund must be made solely on qualifying projects, in a designated qualifying rural area. For additional information see RCW 82.16.0491.~~

~~(c) The total amount of credits available statewide on a fiscal year basis for all qualified businesses is three hundred fifty thousand dollars. The department will allow earned credits on a first-come, first-served basis. The right to earn these tax credits expired June 30, 2011. Unused earned credits may be carried forward to subsequent years provided the department has given prior approval.) incentive payments to eligible customers under the state energy performance standard early adoption incentive program. The credit is equal to the amount of incentive payments made under RCW 19.27A.220 in any calendar~~

year, plus documented administrative costs not to exceed eight percent of the incentive payments.

(a) A light and power business may take the credit against its PUT liability, but the credit may not exceed the PUT that would normally be due. The credit may be claimed during the same calendar year that the light and power business made incentive payments and incurred administrative expenses, or carried forward for the following two calendar years. A light and power business may not carry the credit backward or receive a refund in the place of a credit.

(b) A business that claims credit in excess of the amount actually earned must repay the excess amount, in addition to interest accruing from the date the credit was claimed to the date of repayment. The department must provide written notice of the amount of any excess credit and interest due. The amount due must be paid within thirty days of the date of notice. The interest rate for excess credit claimed is equal to the rate for delinquent excise taxes under chapter 82.32 RCW. However, businesses do not need to repay excess credits claimed based on amounts reported to the business by the department of commerce under RCW 19.27A.220, if the amounts are later found abnormal or inaccurate through no fault of the business.

(c) The right to earn credits under this early adoption incentive program expires June 30, 2032.

Part IV - Gas and Water Distribution Businesses

(401) **Gas distribution.** Gross income received for the distribution of gas is taxable under PUT as provided by RCW 82.16.020. Gas distribution business means the business of operating a plant or system for the production or distribution for hire or sale of gas, whether manufactured or natural. RCW 82.16.010. See Part II for general exemptions and deductions that may apply to gas distribution.

(402) **Requirements for gas distribution businesses.** RCW 82.16.090 requires that customer billings issued by gas distribution businesses serving more than twenty thousand customers include the following information:

(a) The rates and amounts of taxes paid directly by the customer on products or services rendered by such business; and

(b) The rate, origin, and approximate amount of each tax levied on the revenue of such business which has been added as a component of the amount charged to the customer. This does not include taxes levied by the federal government or taxes levied under chapters 54.28, 80.24, or 82.04 RCW.

(c) In addition to the general exemptions and deductions noted in Part II of this rule, the law provides the following:

(i) **Sales of natural or manufactured gas to aluminum smelters.** RCW 82.16.0498 provides an exemption to be taken in the form of a credit for sales of natural or manufactured gas to aluminum smelters. The credit is allowed if the contract for sale of gas to an aluminum smelter specifies that the price charged for the gas will be reduced by an amount equal to the credit. The credit allowed is the same amount as the utility tax that would otherwise have been due under RCW 82.16.020.

(ii) **Conservation - Energy from gas.** RCW 82.16.055 provides deductions for the production or generation of energy from cogeneration or renewable resources and for measures to improve the efficiency of energy end-use. See subsection (306)(c) of this rule.

(iii) **Compressed natural gas and liquefied natural gas used as transportation fuel.**

(A) Effective July 1, 2015, RCW 82.16.310 provides an exemption for sales by a gas distribution business of natural gas, compressed natural gas, and liquefied natural gas if the:

(I) Compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas is sold or used as transportation fuel; or

(II) Buyer uses natural gas to manufacture compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas to be sold or used as transportation fuel.

(B) Effective July 28, 2019, RCW 82.16.310 provides an exemption for sales by a gas distribution business of renewable natural gas.

(C) The buyer must provide and the seller must retain an exemption certificate. See the department's website at: dor.wa.gov for the "Purchases of Natural Gas for Use as Transportation Fuel" form. RCW 82.16.310.

~~((C))~~ (D) Although sales of natural gas, compressed natural gas, ~~(and)~~ liquefied natural gas, and renewable natural gas may be exempt under RCW 82.16.310, the income from such sales may be subject to other taxes such as business and occupation tax and retail sales tax.

~~((D))~~ (E) For the purpose of this subsection, "transportation fuel" means fuel for the generation of power to propel a motor vehicle as defined in RCW 46.04.320, a vessel as defined in RCW 88.02.310, or a locomotive or railroad car. "Renewable natural gas" is defined in RCW 54.04.190 to mean a gas consisting largely of methane and other hydrocarbons derived from the decomposition of organic material in landfills, wastewater treatment facilities, and anaerobic digesters.

(403) **Credits for gas distribution businesses.** Credit is available to gas distribution businesses that make incentive payments to eligible customers under the state energy performance standard early adoption incentive program. The credit is equal to the amount of incentive payments made under RCW 19.27A.220 in any calendar year, plus documented administrative costs not to exceed eight percent of the incentive payments.

(a) A gas distribution business may take the credit against its PUT liability, but the credit may not exceed the PUT that would normally be due. The credit may be claimed during the same calendar year that the gas distribution business made incentive payments and incurred administrative expenses, or carried forward for the following two calendar years. A gas distribution business may not carry the credit backward or receive a refund in the place of a credit.

(b) A business that claims credit in excess of the amount actually earned must repay the excess amount, in addition to interest accruing from the date the credit was claimed to the date of repayment. The department must provide written notice of the amount of any excess credit and interest due. The amount due must be paid within thirty days of the date of notice. The interest rate for excess credit claimed is equal to the rate for delinquent excise taxes under chapter 82.32 RCW. However, businesses do not need to repay excess credits claimed based on amounts reported to the business by the department of commerce under RCW 19.27A.220, if the amounts are later found abnormal or inaccurate through no fault of the business.

(c) The right to earn credits under this early adoption incentive program expires June 30, 2032.

(404) **Water distribution.** PUT is imposed on amounts derived from the distribution of water under RCW 82.16.020. Water distribution business means the business of operating a plant or system for the distribution of water for hire or sale. RCW 82.16.010. In addition to

the general exemptions and deductions noted in Part II of this rule, the law provides the following:

(a) **Water distribution by a nonprofit water association.** Amounts derived from the distribution of water by a nonprofit water association and used for capital improvements, related to the water distribution service, by that association are deductible under RCW 82.16.050(12).

(b) **Distribution of irrigation water.** Amounts derived from the distribution of water through an irrigation system, for irrigation purposes, are deductible under RCW 82.16.050(7). The phrase "for irrigation purposes" means water used solely for nourishing plant life. Thus, when a water distribution business supplies potable water and some of the water is segregated and separately supplied solely for the nourishing of plant life as opposed to water supplied for domestic, municipal, or industrial uses, charges for such separately supplied irrigation water may be deducted from gross income subject to PUT.

To meet the "irrigation system" requirement, a water distribution business must demonstrate that its distribution system has turnouts or similar connections for irrigation purposes that are separate from service hookups or similar connections for domestic, industrial, or municipal uses. Under the appropriate circumstances, the use of separate meters and cross-connection or back flow devices may be evidence of such separate connections.