



# SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

## STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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Bill Number: H.3836  
 Author: Loftis  
 Requestor: House Ways and Means  
 Date: June 2, 2015  
 Subject: Motor Fuels  
 RFA Analyst(s): Dunbar and Shealy

### Estimate of Fiscal Impact

	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17
<b>State Expenditure</b>		
General Fund	N/A	N/A
Other and Federal	N/A	N/A
Full-Time Equivalent Position(s)	0.00	0.00
<b>State Revenue</b>		
General Fund	(\$2,718,750)	N/A
Other and Federal	(\$17,070)	N/A
<b>Local Expenditure</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Local Revenue</b>	(\$127,366)	N/A

### Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill is expected to reduce environmental and inspection fee revenue by \$17,070 in FY 2015-16 from no longer imposing the fee on alternative fuel. General Fund revenue is expected to be reduced by \$418,750 from allowing an income tax credit for purchasing or installing an alternative fueling station and by \$2,300,000 for allowing an income tax credit for the conversion cost or incremental cost of purchasing an alternative fuel vehicle. In sum, this bill would reduce General Fund revenue by \$2,718,750, Other Fund revenue by \$17,070, and Local Revenue by \$127,366 in FY 2015-16. There will be no expenditure impact to the General Fund, Federal Funds, or Other Funds from this bill.

### Explanation of Fiscal Impact

#### State Expenditure

The Department of Revenue indicates that there will be no expenditure impact to the General Fund, Federal Funds, or Other Funds from this bill.

#### State Revenue

**Sections 1, 2, and 3.** These sections amend Section 12-28-110 adding the term liquefied natural gas to the definition of alternative fuel. It also adds the definition of diesel gallon equivalent to clarify the amount of liquefied natural gas that has the equivalent energy of one gallon of diesel fuel. The Department of Revenue reports that liquefied natural gas is currently taxed at the motor fuel user fee of \$0.1675 per gallon, or at the equivalent diesel gallon rate. Therefore, these sections of the bill would have no revenue impact.

**Section 4.** Section 12-28-2380 is amended so that alternative fuel is not subject to the \$0.0075 environmental and inspection fee per gallon of motor fuel. Based upon data from the U.S. Department of Energy, an estimated 2,276,000 gasoline-equivalent gallons of alternative fuel will be purchased in FY 2015-16. The corresponding reduction of environmental and inspection fee revenue is \$17,070 for FY 2015-16.

**Section 5.** Section 56-5-4160, relating to vehicle and load weight, is amended to allow up to an additional two thousand pounds in gross, single axle, tandem axle, or bridge formula weight limits for any motor vehicle that is fueled, wholly or partially, by natural gas. To be eligible for the exemption, the operator of the vehicle must be able to demonstrate that the vehicle is powered by natural gas. Based upon the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Energy, the number of vehicles that would qualify for the exemption is very small and varies from year to year- most years zero. Therefore, the expected revenue generated from overweight fines from this section is minimal in FY 2015-16.

**Section 7.** This section allows an income tax credit equal to twenty-five percent of the cost to the taxpayer of purchasing, constructing, and installing property that is used for distribution, dispensing, or storing alternative fuel. The credit may be taken in three annual installments beginning with the taxable year in which the property is placed in service. Based upon the most recent information from the U.S. Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center, there are currently 48 alternative fuel dispensing stations in South Carolina. Based upon data from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Natural Gas Vehicles for America Organization, the average cost of an alternative fuel station is \$1,005,000. Applying expected the growth rate of alternative fuel vehicles in South Carolina to the number of alternative fueling stations would result in an additional 5 fueling stations for a total estimated cost of \$5,025,000 in FY 2015-16. The corresponding reduction in income tax revenue from the twenty-five percent tax credit would be \$418,750 in FY 2015-16.

**Section 8.** This section allows a nonrefundable income tax credit to a taxpayer for the incremental costs or conversion costs of purchasing or converting an alternative fuel heavy-duty vehicle, alternative fuel vehicle, or bi-fuel alternative vehicle for commercial purposes. The taxpayer is allowed a credit of fifty percent of the incremental or conversion costs not to exceed twelve thousand dollars, eight thousand dollars, or six thousand dollars for an alternative fuel heavy-duty vehicle, alternative fuel vehicle, and bi-fuel alternative vehicle, respectively.

A taxpayer must weigh the options of buying a new qualified alternative vehicle or have an existing vehicle converted to accept the alternative fuel. There are several deciding factors including:

1. A new qualified alternative fueled motor vehicle will cost more up front. An alternative fueled motor vehicle will cost several thousand dollars more than a conventionally fueled motor vehicle.
2. The conversion of an existing motor vehicle to an alternative fueled motor vehicle can range from \$8,000 to \$12,000, or more, per vehicle.

3. Finding a mechanic that is fully trained and possess all of the necessary certifications and credentials may be difficult. It may cost a repair garage upward of \$100,000 to become a business certified to make vehicle conversions.
4. Finding alternative fuel stations can be difficult. There are less than 1,000 CNG fueling stations across the country. This will hamper the ability of vehicles to take long trips or to reach particular parts of the country.
5. According to the latest figures from the U.S. Department of Energy, *Clean Cities Alternative Fuel Price Report*, the nationwide average price of regular gasoline is \$2.42 per gallon and diesel gasoline is \$2.88 per gallon. The average price of compressed natural gas is \$2.09 per gasoline gallon equivalent.

Based on these points, we believe that a buyer of an alternative fueled vehicle would be better off buying a new alternative fuel vehicle rather than invest in the conversion of an existing conventionally fueled motor vehicle. A buyer would be indifferent if a \$10,000 after market conversion by a third party with a ten percent conversion credit versus buying a new alternative fuel motor vehicle that is priced \$10,000 higher than a conventional motor vehicle. Based upon the U.S. Department of Energy estimates, there will be 460 new alternative fuel trucks, pickups, and buses purchased in FY 2015-16. The average incremental cost of an alternative fuel vehicle is \$10,000 for a total of \$4,600,000 in FY 2015-16. The corresponding reduction in income tax revenue due to the refundable credit is \$2,300,000.

#### **Local Expenditure**

N/A

#### **Local Revenue**

**Section 6.** This section amends the definition of gross capitalized cost so that the valuation basis of a motor vehicle fueled wholly or partially by natural gas or propane is comparable to that of a diesel or gasoline powered vehicle. The gross capitalized cost of a motor vehicle fueled wholly or partially with natural gas or propane is reduced by a dollar amount of thirty percent of its original value. Based upon data from the U.S. Department of Energy and the S.C. Department of Motor Vehicles, 2.165% of motor carriers over 26,000 pounds are powered by alternative fuel. Based upon the collections from the South Carolina Department of Revenue through March 2015, the total estimated motor carrier property tax revenue is \$19,609,925 for FY 2015-16. The corresponding amount of motor carrier property tax revenue due to alternative vehicles is \$424,555 for FY 2015-16. Reducing the valuation basis of these vehicles by thirty percent would result in a \$127,366 reduction in motor carrier property tax revenue.



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director