



## DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

270 Washington St., S.W., Suite 1-156  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-8400

**Greg S. Griffin**  
STATE AUDITOR  
(404) 656-2174

December 1, 2016

Honorable Jay Powell  
Chairman, House Ways and Means  
133 State Capitol  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note  
House Bill (LC 43 0430)

Dear Chairman Powell:

The bill would create a sales tax exemption for certain tangible property used in the repair or maintenance of boats. Under the bill, if the total cost of tangible property used in a repair of a boat exceeds \$500,000, then all tangible property used in that repair is exempt from sales and use taxes. The bill does not specify an effective date for the exemption, so it is assumed to be effective for purchases on or after July 1, 2017.

Limited data are available from which to estimate the revenue effects of this exemption, but an economic impact assessment of a planned boat repair yard in the Savannah area enabled estimation of the foregone sales tax revenue from the exemption for that facility. Based on that analysis and certain assumptions regarding other facilities detailed in the attached appendix, projected state revenue losses from the sales tax exemption are between \$0.5 and \$0.8 million in FY 2018, rising to between \$1.1 and \$1.7 million in FY 2022, as shown in **Table 1**. Local revenue losses are slightly lower each year.

**Table 1. State Revenue Loss from LC 43 0430**

<i>(\$ millions)</i>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>
Low Loss Estimates:					
State Revenue Loss	\$0.5	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$1.1	\$1.1
Local Revenue Loss	\$0.4	\$0.8	\$0.8	\$0.8	\$0.9
High Loss Estimates:					
State Revenue Loss	\$0.8	\$1.6	\$1.7	\$1.7	\$1.7
Local Revenue Loss	\$0.6	\$1.2	\$1.2	\$1.3	\$1.3

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg S. Griffin".

Greg S. Griffin  
State Auditor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teresa A. MacCartney".

Teresa A. MacCartney, Director  
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/TAM/mt

### Analysis by the Fiscal Research Center

The economic impact assessment of the Savannah Yacht Center (SYC), which is currently under construction in Savannah and scheduled to begin limited operations in 2017 (see company website, [savannahyc.com](http://savannahyc.com)), projects revenues for the facility, and describes the activities and cost structure such that the cost of parts for major repair and refitting activities could be roughly estimated.

- Revenues at anticipated operating levels are projected in the report to be \$52 million annually once the facility is fully operational. For purposes of the projections, revenues for calendar year 2018 are assumed to be \$52 million (half of that in FY 2018), growing thereafter at 2 percent per annum.
- Based on the same report, it is assumed that major repairs, those of the scope and duration likely to reach the \$500,000 of tangible property threshold in the bill, account for about 64 percent of total revenues or about \$33 million the first calendar year. Of that, about 43 percent (or about \$14 million the first calendar year) is assumed to be spent for the purchase of parts and materials for these major repairs.

On this basis, state and local (at 3%) sales tax revenues from SYC’s major repairs parts and materials purchases, absent the exemption, would be as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Savannah Yacht Center Major Repair Parts, Estimated Sales Tax Cost**

(\$ millions)	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
State Revenue Loss	\$0.27	\$0.54	\$0.55	\$0.56	\$0.57
Local Revenue Loss	\$0.20	\$0.41	\$0.41	\$0.42	\$0.43

Existing businesses may also qualify for the proposed exemption, but no data are available as to the volumes of such existing, qualifying activity. A search for yacht and ship repair yards in Georgia revealed two facilities that, to varying degrees, are similar to SYC in terms of facilities and services offered. Both appear to be smaller in terms of boat sizes handled and only one appears to have a dry dock. However, both have lifts and ship rails and offer major repair and refitting services. Other facilities may exist, though none could be identified. For this reason, the estimates in Table 1 include existing, qualifying activity of one and two times that estimated for SYC. These amounts are shown as the low and high cost estimates, respectively.