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Introduced by Senator Collier

March 20, 1950

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON RULES

An act to add Part 3.5, comprising Sections 9401 to 9624 inclusive, to Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code, relating to the levy and collection of a highway users tax, and providing that this act shall take effect immediately.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

Section 1. Part 3.5 is added to the Revenue and Taxation Code, to read:

PART 3.5. HIGHWAY USERS TAX LAW

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND DEFINITIONS

9401. This part is known and may be cited as the "Highway Users Tax Law."

9402. Except where the context otherwise requires, the definitions given in this chapter govern the construction of this part.

9403. "Motor vehicle" includes every self-propelled vehicle having an unladen weight in excess of 6,000 pounds operated, or suitable for operation, on the highway, except a vehicle propelled by fuel included in the measure of the tax imposed by Part 2 of this division or an electric vehicle subject to additional registration fees under Sections 371 and 372 of the Vehicle Code.

9404. "Motor vehicle" does not include a vehicle used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks or an implement of husbandry, truck or tractor used in agricultural operations and only incidentally operated or moved upon a highway.

9405. "Highway" includes every way or place generally open to the use of the public for the purpose of vehicular travel, notwithstanding that the way or place may be temporarily closed for construction, reconstruction, maintenance or repair.

9406. "Person" includes any individual, firm, copartnership, joint venture, association, corporation, estate, trust, business trust, receiver, syndicate, this State, any county, city and county, municipality, district, or other political subdivision thereof, or any other group or combination acting as a unit.

9407. "Operator" includes any person having the use or control, or the right to the use or control, of any motor vehicle.

9408. "Unladen weight" includes the weight of a motor vehicle as that term is defined in Section 50 of the Vehicle Code.

9409. "Passenger motor vehicle" includes every motor vehicle designed and used primarily for the transportation of passengers.

9410. "Freight motor vehicle" includes every motor vehi-

cle used primarily for the transportation of property.

9411. "In this State" or "in the State" means within the exterior limits of the State of California and includes all territory within these limits owned by or ceded to the United States of America.

9412. "Department" means the Department of Motor Vehicles.

CHAPTER 2. IMPOSITION OF TAX

9421. For the privilege of operating a motor vehicle a tax is hereby imposed upon the operator thereof at rates per mile of operation in this State as follows:

Type of motor vehicle	Tax rate per mile
Passenger	\$0.007
Freight	\$0.01

9422. The tax imposed by this part does not apply with respect to the mileage of any motor vehicle from an operation conducted exclusively on private property, no portion of the highway being used in such operation.

9423. The tax imposed by this part shall be in lieu of the tax imposed upon the use of fuel under Part 3 of this division.

CHAPTER 3. PERMITS AND EMBLEMS

Article 1. Permits

9431. Every person desiring to become an operator of a motor vehicle within the meaning of this part shall first secure a highway user's tax permit.

9432. An application for a permit shall be made to the board upon a form prescribed by the board, accompanied by a fee of one dollar (\$1) payable to the board.

- 3 -**S.B.** 11

Upon the receipt of an application, accompanied by the required fee, the board shall issue to the applicant a permit to operate a motor vehicle subject to the tax imposed by this part.

No permit issued is assignable by operation of law 9434.

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Every permit issued is valid until canceled or 9435. revoked by the board.

Article 2. **Emblems**

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After obtaining the permit the operator shall obtain from the board an emblem for each motor vehicle operated by him indicating, in such manner as the board may determine, that the operator of the motor vehicle has obtained the permit

required under this part,

The emblem shall be attached to and conspicuously displayed upon each of the motor vehicles authorized to be operated by the permittee in such manner as the board may require, but must be removed therefrom upon the cancellation or revocation of the permit or whenever the permittee ceases to be the operator of the motor vehicle.

Revocation and Reinstatement of Permit Article 3.

Whenever an operator to whom a permit has been issued under this part fails to comply with any provision of this part or any rule or regulation of the board prescribed or adopted hereunder, the board may revoke his permit upon hearing, after giving the operator at least 10 days' notice in writing of the time and place at which he may show cause why his permit should not be revoked. The notice may be served personally or by mail in the manner prescribed for the service of notice for a deficiency determination.

The board may impound the motor vehicle or motor 9452. vehicles of an operator whose permit has been revoked whenever the motor vehicle or motor vehicles are found to be in operation upon the highway. The board may retain possession of the motor vehicles so impounded until all taxes, interest and penalties due from the operator and all costs incurred in connection with the impounding or storage of the motor vehicles have been paid.

It is unlawful for any person whose permit has been canceled or revoked to operate a motor vehicle subject to provisions of this board until he has complied fully with such provi-

sions and has been issued a new permit hereunder.

9454. Subsequent to the cancellation or revocation of a permit of an operator the board may reissue a permit to him if he pays all taxes, interest and penalties due under this part, together with any costs incurred by the board and chargeable to him, as well as the fee for issuance of the new permit, and otherwise complies fully with the provisions of this part.



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9455. If the permit of an operator has been revoked, the department shall not thereafter reregister any motor vehicle of the operator the operation of which is taxable under this part, or transfer the registration of ownership thereof upon the records of the department, until the board issues to the department a certificate to the effect that the operator has complied with the requirements of this part.

9456. Transfer by the department of the registered ownership of any motor vehicle for which an emblem has been issued under this part may be effected only after a certificate of tax clearance has been issued therefor by the board. This certificate may be issued only after payment of all amounts due from the operator under this part or after such payment is secured to the satisfaction of the board. Issuance of the certificate extinguishes completely the lien for which provision is made in this part with respect to the motor vehicle described in the certificate.

CHAPTER 4. DETERMINATION

Article 1. Returns and Payments

9461. The tax imposed by this part is due and payable monthly on or before the twentieth day of the month following each calendar month during which taxable operations occur.

9462. On or before the twentieth day of each month the operator shall file on forms prescribed by the board a return showing the mileage of operations of his motor vehicles during the preceding calendar month, and such other information as the board may require to carry out the purposes of this part.

9463. The operator shall accompany each report with a remittance payable to the board for the amount of tax due.

9464. The board, for good cause, may extend for not to exceed 20 days the time for making any return or payment required under this part. The extension may be granted at any time provided a request therefor is filed with the board within or prior to the period for which the extension may be granted, but any operator to whom an extension is granted shall pay, in addition to the tax, interest at the rate of one-half of 1 percent per month or fraction thereof from the date on which the tax would have been due without extension to the date of payment.

9465. To insure payment of the tax imposed by this part or to facilitate the administration of this part the board, in its discretion, may require returns and payment of the tax to be made for other than monthly periods.

Article 2. Deficiency Determinations

9471. If the board is dissatisfied with the return filed or amount of tax paid by any operator, it may make a deficiency determination of the tax required to be paid by the operator based upon information contained in the return or upon any information in its possession. A deficiency determination may

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be made of the amount of tax due for one or for more than one month.

9472. All deficiency determinations, exclusive of penalties, shall bear interest at the rate of one-half of 1 percent per month, or fraction thereof, from the twentieth day after the close of the month or months for which the deficiency determination is made until the date of payment.

9473. In making a determination the board may offset overpayments for a month or months against underpayments for another month or months, against penalties, and against the interest on the underpayments.

9474. If any part of the deficiency for which a deficiency determination is made is due to negligence or intentional disregard of this part or authorized rules and regulations, a penalty of 10 percent of the amount of the determination shall be added thereto.

9475. If any part of the deficiency for which a deficiency determination is made is due to fraud or an intent to evade the tax, a penalty of 25 percent of the amount of the determination shall be added thereto.

9476. The board shall give the operator written notice of its determination. The notice may be served personally or by mail; if by mail, service shall be made pursuant to Section 1013 of the Code of Civil Procedure and shall be addressed to the operator at his address as it appears in the records of the board. Service shall be deemed complete at the time of the deposit of the notice in the mail without extension of time on account of the distance between the place of deposit and the place of address.

9477. Except in the case of a fraudulent return or neglect or refusal to make a return, every notice of a deficiency determination shall be mailed to the operator within three years after the return of the operator is filed.

Article 3. Determinations if No Return Made

9481. If any operator fails, neglects, or refuses to file a return within the time required, the board shall make an estimate of the amount of the taxable gross receipts of the operator for the month or months for which the operator failed to make a return. Upon the basis of this estimate the board shall compute and determine the tax payable by the operator, adding to the amount of tax so determined a penalty equal to 10 percent thereof. A determination may be made of the amount of tax due for one or for more than one month.

9482. In making a determination the board may offset overpayments for a month or months against underpayments for another month or months, against penalties, and against the interest on the underpayments.

9483. All determinations so made, exclusive of penalties, shall bear interest at the rate of one-half of 1 percent per month, or fraction thereof, from the twentieth day after the

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49 50 close of the month or months for which the determinations are made until the date of payment.

If the neglect or refusal of an operator to file a return is due to fraud or an intent to evade the tax, a penalty of 25 percent of the tax shall be added thereto in addition to the 10 percent penalty provided in Section 9481.

9485. Promptly after making its determination the board shall give to the delinquent written notice of the estimate, tax, and penalty, the notice to be served personally or by mail in the manner prescribed for service of notice of a deficiency deter-

11 mination. 12

Article 4. Jeopardy Determinations

If the board believes that the collection of any amount of tax imposed under this part will be jeopardized by delay, it shall thereupon make a determination of the amount of tax due, noting that fact upon the determination. The amount determined is immediately due and payable.

9492. If the amount of the tax, interest, and penalty specified in the jeopardy determination is not paid within 10 days after service upon the operator of notice of the determination, the determination becomes final, unless a petition for redetermination is filed within the 10 days, and the delinquency penalty and interest provided in Article 6 of this chapter shall

attach to the amount of tax specified.

The operator against whom a jeopardy determina-9493. tion is made may petition for the redetermination thereof pursuant to Article 5 of this chapter. He shall, however, file the petition for redetermination with the board within 10 days after the service upon him of notice of the determination. The operator shall also within the 10-day period deposit with the board such security as it may deem necessary to insure compliance with this part. The security may be sold by the board in the manner prescribed by Section 9521.

Article 5. Redeterminations

Any operator against whom a determination is made by the board under Articles 2 or 3 of this chapter may petition for a redetermination within 15 days after the date of mailing the notice thereof to the operator. If a petition for redetermination is not filed within the 15-day period, the determination becomes final at the expiration of the period.

If a petition for redetermination is filed within the 15-day period, the board shall reconsider the determination and, if the operator has so requested in his petition, shall grant the operator an oral hearing and shall give him 10 days' notice of the time and place of the hearing. The board may continue the hearing from time to time as may be necessary.

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9503. The order or decision of the board upon a petition for redetermination becomes final 15 days after the date of mailing the notice thereof to the operator.

9504 All determinations made by the board under

9504. All determinations made by the board under Articles 2 or 3 of this chapter are due and payable at the time they become final. If they are not paid when due and payable, a penalty of 10 percent of the amount of the determination, exclusive of interest and penalties, shall be added thereto.

9505. Any notice required by this article shall be served personally or by mail in the manner prescribed for service of notice of a deficiency determination.

Article 6. Interest and Penalties

9511. Any operator who fails to pay any tax, except taxes determined by the board under Articles 2 or 3 of this chapter, within the time required shall pay a penalty of 10 percent of the unpaid amount of the tax, in addition to the tax, plus interest at the rate of one-half of 1 percent per month, or fraction thereof, from the date on which the tax became due and payable until the date of payment.

CHAPTER 5. COLLECTION OF TAX

Article 1. Security for Tax

9521. The board, whenever it deems it necessary to insure compliance with this part or any rule or regulation adopted under this part, may require any operator to deposit with it such security as it may determine. The board may sell the security at public sale if it becomes necessary so to do in order to recover any amount due under this part. Notice of the sale may be served upon the person who deposited the security personally or by mail in the manner prescribed for service of notice of a deficiency determination. Security in the form of a bearer bond issued by the United States or the State of California which has a prevailing market price may, however, be sold by the board at private sale at a price not lower than the prevailing market price thereof. Upon any sale, any surplus above the amount due shall be returned to the person who deposited the security.

9522. If any operator is delinquent in the payment of any obligation imposed under this part, or in the event that a determination has been made against him which remains unpaid, the board may give notice of the amount of the delinquency by registered mail to all persons having in their possession or under their control any credits or other personal property belonging to the operator, or owing any debts to the operator. After receiving the notice the persons so notified shall neither transfer nor make other disposition of the credits, personal property, or debts in their possession or under their

control at the time they receive the notice until the board consents to a transfer or disposition or until 60 days elapse after the receipt of the notice. All persons so notified shall within five days after the receipt of the notice advise the board of all such credits, personal property, or debts in their possession, under their control, or owing by them.

Article 2. Suit for Tax

9531. The board may request the Attorney General to bring suit for the recovery of any unpaid tax, interest, penalties, and costs.

9532. The Attorney General shall bring suit for any amount due and costs on the written request of the board and in the name of the people of the State of California in a court of competent jurisdiction in the County of Sacramento.

9533. Payment of an amount to the board for and on account of the tax and the acceptance thereof does not bar an action by the State to recover any additional amount which is actually due.

9534. In the action a writ of attachment may issue, and no bond or affidavit previous to the issuing of the attachment is required.

9535. In the action a certificate issued by the board showing unpaid taxes determined against any operator shall be prima facie evidence of all of the following:

(a) The determination of the tax, the delinquency thereof, and the amount of the tax, interest, penalties, and costs due and unpaid to the State.

(b) The indebtedness of the operator to the State in the amount of the tax, interest, and penalties therein appearing unpaid.

(c) The full compliance by all persons required to perform administrative duties under this part with all the forms of law in relation to the determination and levy of the tax.

Article 3. Lien of Tax

9541. The tax, penalties, interest and costs accruing under this part constitute a lien upon all motor vehicles of the operator subject to the provisions of this part.

9542. The lien attaches at the time of the operations giving rise to the tax and has the effect of an execution duly levied against all property of the operator mentioned in Section 9541.

9543. The lien remains until the tax and all penalties and interest accruing thereon are paid, or the property is sold for the payment thereof.

9544. The lien is paramount to all private liens or encumbrances of whatever character, and to the rights of any holder of the legal title, in or to any motor vehicle the privilege of operating which is subject to the tax.

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9545. The department may transfer the registered ownership of any motor vehicle subject to this part only after a certificate of tax clearance has been issued by the board. The certificate may be issued after the payment of all amounts due under this part, according to the records of the board as of the date of the certificate, or after the payment of the amounts is secured to the satisfaction of the board.

Article 4. Seizure and Sale

9551. Whenever any operator is delinquent in the payment of the obligations imposed under this part, the board or its authorized representative may collect the amount due in the following manner: The board may seize any motor vehicle subject to the lien imposed under this part and sell the vehicle at public auction to pay the amount due and any costs incurred

on account of the seizure and sale.

9552. Notice of the sale and the time and place thereof shall be given in writing to the delinquent operator and to all persons appearing of record to have an interest in the motor vehicle seized at least 10 days before the date set for the sale. The notice shall be enclosed in an envelope addressed to the operator at his last known residence or place of business in this State and, in the case of any person appearing of record to have an interest in the motor vehicle seized, addressed to the person at his last known residence or place of business in this State. It shall be deposited in the United States mail, postage prepaid. The notice shall also be published for at least 10 days before the date set for the sale in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county in which the vehicle seized is to be sold. If , there is no newspaper of general circulation in the county, notice, shall be posted in three public places in the county 10 days prior to the date set for the sale. The notice shall contain a description of the property to be sold, a statement of the amount due, the name of the operator, and the further statement that unless the amount is paid on or before the time fixed in the notice of sale. the property will be sold in accordance with law and the notice.

9553. At the sale the board or its authorized agent shall sell the vehicle in accordance with law and the notice and shall deliver to the purchaser a bill of sale which vests title in the

purchaser.

9554. If upon the sale the moneys received exceed the amount due to the State from the operator, the board shall return the excess to the operator and obtain his receipt. If any person having an interest in or lien upon the motor vehicle files with the board prior to the sale notice of his interest or lien, the board shall withhold payment of any excess pending a determination of the rights of the respective parties thereto by a court of competent jurisdiction. If for any reason the receipt of the operator is not available, the board shall deposit the

excess moneys with the State Treasurer, as trustee for the operator, subject to the order of the operator, his heirs, successors, or assigns.

Article 5. Miscellaneous Provisions

9561. The remedies of the State provided for in this chapter are cumulative, and no action taken by the board constitutes an election by the State to pursue any remedy to the exclusion of any other remedy for which provision is made in this part.

CHAPTER 6. OVERPAYMENTS AND REFUNDS

Article 1. Claim for Refund

9571. If the board determines that any amount not required to be paid under this part has been paid by any person, the board shall set forth in its records and certify to the State Board of Control the amount paid in excess of the amount legally due and the person by whom the excess was paid to the board. If the State Board of Control approves, the excess shall be credited on any amounts then due and payable from the person under this part, and the balance shall be refunded to the person, or his successors, administrators, executors, or assigns.

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 9572. No credit or refund shall be allowed after three years from the date of overpayment unless a claim therefor is filed with the board within three years from the date of overpayment.

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9573. The claim shall be in writing and shall state the

specific grounds upon which it is founded.

9574. In the case, however, of a determination by the board that an amount not exceeding twenty-five dollars (\$25) was not required to be paid under this part, the board, without obtaining the approval of the State Board of Control, may credit the amount on any amounts then due and payable under this part from the person by whom the amount was paid and may authorize the person to deduct the balance from any amounts to become due from him under this part.

Article 2. Suit for Refund

9581. No injunction or writ of mandate or other legal or equitable process shall issue in any suit, action, or proceeding in any court against this State or against any officer of the State to prevent or enjoin the collection under this part of any tax or other amounts required to be collected or to prevent or enjoin the revocation of any permit issued under this part or any other action whereby it is sought to enforce the payment of any tax or other amounts required to be paid.

9582. After payment of any amount, the operator making the payment may bring an action against the board in a court of competent jurisdiction in the County of Sacramento for the recovery of the amount paid.

9583. No action may be instituted more than one year after the payment of the amount sought to be recovered. Failure to bring suit within the year constitutes a waiver of any demand

against the State on account of alleged overpayments.

9584. If judgment is rendered for the plaintiff, the amount of the judgment shall first be credited on any amounts due from the plaintiff under this part and Part 2 of Division 2 of this code, and the balance of the judgment shall be refunded to the plaintiff. In any judgment, interest shall be allowed at the rate of 6 percent per annum upon the amount found to have been illegally collected from the date of payment of the amount to the date of allowance of credit on account of the judgment or to a date preceding the date of the refund warrant by not more than 30 days, the date to be determined by the board.

9585. A judgment shall not be rendered in favor of the plaintiff in any action brought against the board to recover any amount paid when the action is brought by or in the name of an assignee of the operator.

Article 3. Cancellations

9591. If any amount has been illegally determined, the board shall set forth in its records and certify to the State Board of Control the amount determined in excess of the amount legally due and the person against whom the determination was made. If the State Board of Control approves, it shall authorize the cancellation of the amount upon the records of the board.

CHAPTER 7. ADMINISTRATION

9601. The board shall enforce the provisions of this part and may prescribe, adopt, and enforce rules and regulations relating to the administration and enforcement of this part. The board may prescribe the extent to which any ruling or regulation shall be applied without retroactive effect.

9602. The board may employ accountants, auditors, investigators, assistants, and clerks necessary for the efficient

administration of this part.

9603. Every operator shall keep records with respect to his operation of motor vehicles in such form as the board may require.

9604. The board or its authorized representative may examine the books, papers, records, and equipment of any operator and may investigate the operation of his motor vehicles in order to ascertain whether all taxes due under this part are being properly reported and paid.

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It is unlawful for the board or any person having an administrative duty under this part to make known in any manner whatever the business affairs, operations, or information obtained by an investigation of records and equipment of any operator visited or examined in the discharge of official duty, or the amount or source of income, profits, losses, expenditures, or any particular thereof set forth or disclosed in any report, or to permit any report or copy thereof or any book containing any abstract or particulars thereof to be seen or examined by any person. Information respecting the tax due from an operator may be furnished, however, to any person owning or having an interest in a motor vehicle subject to the lien of the tax. The Governor may, by general or special order, authorize examination of the reports by other state officers, by tax officers of another state, by the Federal Government, if a reciprocal arrangement exists, or by any other person.

Before registering any motor vehicle, the department shall ascertain from the applicant for registration whether or not the motor vehicle sought to be registered is of a type the operation of which is subject to the tax imposed under this part. If the motor vehicle is of such a type the department shall

notify the board.

CHAPTER 8. DISTRIBUTION OF PROCEEDS

The board shall transmit all money received by it under this part to the State Treasurer to be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Fund. The board shall at the same time furnish copies of the schedules covering the transmittals to the Controller.

All money deposited in the fund under this part is hereby appropriated as follows:

(a) To pay the refunds authorized in this part.

(b) To the Highway Users Tax Fund as provided in this chapter.

9613. The Controller shall transfer the balance of all money deposited in the Motor Vehicle Fuel Fund under this part, after the payment of refunds, to the Highway Users Tax Fund.

The Controller shall make the transfers at the same time as the transfers to the Highway Users Tax Fund of moneys received under the Motor Vehicle Fuel License Tax Law are made.

CHAPTER 9. VIOLATIONS

Any person who places or causes to be placed fuel into any receptacle on a motor vehicle from which receptacle fuel is supplied for the propulsion of the vehicle is guilty of a misdemeanor unless a valid highway user's tax permit is held by the operator of the vehicle.

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9622. It is unlawful for any person to do any of the following:

(a) Fail, neglect or refuse to make and file any return or statement required by this part in the manner or within the time required.

(b) Make any false statement or conceal any material fact in any record, return, affidavit or claim for which provision is made in this part.

(c) Violate any other provision of this part.

9623. Any person violating any provision of Section 9622 is guilty of a misdemeanor, unless the act is by any other law of this State declared to be a felony, and upon conviction is punishable by a fine of not less than five hundred dollars (\$500) or more than five thousand dollars (\$5,000), or by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding six months, or by both fine and imprisonment.

9624. It is unlawful for any person, or any officer or agent thereof, to engage in any operation of a motor vehicle with respect to which a permit is required under this part without a permit and without an emblem denoting the issuance thereof affixed to the motor vehicle, or after the permit theretofore issued to the operator has been surrendered, canceled or revoked and not replaced. Any violation of this section is subject to the same punishment as is prescribed in Section 2623.

SEO. 2. This act, inasmuch as it provides for a tax levy for the usual current expenses of the State, shall take effect immediately under the provisions of Section 1, Article IV of the Constitution; provided, however, that the provisions of Section 1 hereof shall become operative on July 1, 1950.