

RURAL AREA FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS

DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE

1. Types and estimated numbers of rural areas: There are 73 licensed cigarettes agents; approximately 265 licensed wholesale dealers (including the licensed cigarette agents), 103 of which are strictly vending machine operators; and approximately 22,000 licensed retail dealers (including approximately 4,500 that have multiple locations); some of which are located in rural areas as defined in section 102(10) of the State Administrative Procedure Act. There are 44 counties in the State that are rural areas (having a population of less than 200,000) and 9 more counties having towns that are rural areas (with population densities of 150 or fewer people per square mile).

2. Reporting, recordkeeping and other compliance requirements; and professional services: Part D of Chapter 134 of the Laws of 2010, requires all agents, wholesale dealers and retail dealers in rural areas to pay an amount of tax on all cigarettes possessed for sale in New York State and unaffixed cigarette tax stamps in inventory as of the close of business on June 30, 2010, based on the increased rate of tax. This amount of tax due must be paid by September 20, 2010. The rule provides that returns must be filed by September 20, 2010, showing the quantity of all cigarettes and unaffixed stamps as of the June 30, 2010, close of business inventory. The rule provides procedures relating to the tax on the inventory, including rules for the physical inventory of cigarettes in vending machines that are located in rural areas.

The rule itself imposes no requirements for professional services upon regulated parties in rural areas. Depending on the nature or volume of a taxpayer's inventory of cigarettes and/or unaffixed tax stamps, such taxpayer may deem it necessary to employ additional professional services in order to comply with the provisions of the floor tax imposed by the statute.

3. Costs: Part D of Chapter 134 of the Laws of 2010 increased the tax on cigarettes imposed by Article 20 from \$2.75 to \$4.35 for each 20 cigarettes or fraction thereof. The impact of the statutory increase in cigarette tax, which is ultimately borne by consumers, depends on the volumes involved. There is no tax liability impact on the

regulated parties in rural areas for the implementation of and continuing compliance with the rule as the increased cigarette tax reflected in the rule and the tax on the inventory based on the increased rate of tax are imposed by statute. Regulated parties in rural areas will need to conduct an inventory of the cigarettes and any unaffixed cigarette tax stamps as of the close of business on June 30, 2010. Based on this inventory, returns are required to be filed and any additional tax on this inventory based on the increased cigarette tax will need to be paid. This is necessitated by Part D of Chapter 134 of the Laws of 2010, which imposes a tax on such inventory and sets the payment date. There are administrative/compliance benefits associated with the rule.

Amendments to reflect the increased rate of cigarette tax in section 74.3 of the regulations, relating to the commissions allowed to cigarette agents, will affect commissions allowed. The current percentage rates and related threshold for determining commissions are not amended by the rule and will apply to the increased rate of cigarette tax. As a result of the statutory increase, annual stamping agent commissions (which are set by regulation and are paid out as a fraction of the applicable tax rate) will increase by approximately \$850,000 in the first full year of the increase.

4. Minimizing adverse impact: The majority of the amendments made by the rule are a direct result of statutory changes. An alternative to amending section 74.3 of the regulations as is done by the rule would have been to reduce the rates of commissions allowed to agents in order to maintain the same amount of commission per stamp. Retaining the rate of commissions and applying that rate to the higher amount of tax results in an increase in the commissions on a per stamp basis and has a positive impact on regulated parties in rural areas.

5. Rural area participation: The following organizations are being given an opportunity to participate in the rule's development: the Association of Towns of New York State; Empire State Development, Division of Small Business; the National Federation of Independent Businesses; the New York Association of Convenience Stores; the New York State Association Counties; the New York Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials; the New York State Department of State, Office of Coastal, Local Government, and Community

Sustainability; the Small Business Council of the New York State Business Council; the Retail Council of New York State; and the New York State Association of Wholesale Marketers and Distributors.