

## COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION ACT

[Public Act 210 of 2005](#), as amended, encourages the rehabilitation of commercial property by abating the property taxes generated from new investment for a period up to 10 years. As defined, commercial property is a qualified facility that includes a building or group of contiguous buildings of commercial property that is 15 years or older, of which the primary purpose is the operation of a commercial business enterprise or multifamily residential use. A qualified facility may also include vacant property or other commercial property which, within the immediately preceding 15 years, was commercial property. Types of commercial business enterprises include office, engineering, research and development, warehousing, parts distribution, retail sales, and other commercial activities. Multi-family residential is housing that consists of five or more units. Commercial properties allocated new market tax credits are also considered a qualified facility.

Qualified retail food establishments are considered a qualified facility for purposes of granting the tax abatement. These establishments include a retail supermarket, grocery store, produce market, or delicatessen that offer unprocessed USDA-inspected meat and poultry products or meat products that carry the USDA organic seal, fresh fruits and vegetables, and dairy products for sale to the public. The qualified retail food establishment must be located in a “core community” as defined in the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (PA 146 of 2000) or in an area designated as rural as defined by the United States Census Bureau and is located in an underserved area.

Commercial property does not include property that is to be used as a professional sports stadium or a casino. Land and personal property are not eligible for abatement under this act.

*Note: This document is offered as a general guide only and the legislation should be reviewed by local officials.*

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

“Qualified local government units” mean any city, village or township.

### WHAT IS REHABILITATION?

Rehabilitation is defined as changes to qualified facilities that are required to restore or modify the property, together with all appurtenances, to an economically efficient condition. The new investment in the rehabbed property must result in improvements aggregating to more than 10 percent of

the true cash value of the property at commencement of the rehabilitation of the qualified facility. Rehabilitation includes the following: improvement of floor loads, correction of deficient or excessive height, new or improved fixed building equipment including heating, ventilation, and lighting, reducing multistory facilities to one or two stories, improved structural support including foundations, improved roof structure and cover, floor replacement, improved wall placement, improved exterior and interior appearance of buildings, and other physical changes required to restore or change the property to an economically efficient condition.

Rehabilitation also includes new construction on vacant property from which a previous structure has been demolished and if the new construction is an economic benefit to the local community as determined by the qualified local governmental unit.

Rehabilitation for a qualified retail food establishment also includes new construction.

### WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Before the Commercial Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate (i.e., property tax abatement) can be granted to the commercial property owner, the city, village or township by resolution of its legislative body, must establish a Commercial Rehabilitation District. The establishment of the district may be initiated by the local government unit or by owners of property comprising 50 percent of all taxable value of the property in the proposed district. The district must be at least three acres in size unless it is located in a downtown or business area or contains a qualified retail food establishment.

The city, village or township must hold a hearing to establish a Commercial Rehabilitation District. Notification of the hearing must be given to the county board of commissioners and all real property owners in the proposed district.

After the hearing is held and the local unit of government determines the district meets the requirements of the act, a copy of the resolution adopting the district shall be provided to the county where the district is established. Within 28 days, the county may accept or reject the establishment of the district. In a county with a county executive, the executive can write a letter rejecting the establishment of the district. In all other counties, the county board of commissioners can pass a resolution rejecting the establishment of the district.

Once the district is established, the property owners may file an application with the local clerk for a commercial rehabilitation exemption certificate. Applications are available from the Michigan Department of Treasury. The local clerk shall provide written notification to the assessor of the local unit of government and each taxing jurisdiction that levies ad valorem property taxes of the application hearing. The city, village or township has 60 days after receipt of the application to either approve or disapprove the application. If denied, a reason must be given in the resolution. The assessor and applicant shall be sent a copy of the unapproved resolution by certified mail. If approved, the application and resolution must be sent to the State Tax Commission, which will certify or deny the application within 60 days. A resolution is not effective unless approved by the State Tax Commission.

### COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION EXEMPTION CERTIFICATE

Upon approval by the State Tax Commission, a commercial rehabilitation certificate is issued. The property owner must pay a Commercial Rehabilitation Tax rather than the normal property tax. The certificate must be issued for a period of at least one year, but cannot exceed 10 years. Certificates initially issued for less than 10 years may be extended, but shall not exceed 10 years. The criteria for extensions must be included in the resolution approving the abatement.

The Commercial Rehabilitation Tax freezes the taxable value of the building and exempts the new investment from local taxes. The school operating tax and the State Education Tax (SET) are still levied on the new investment. Land and personal property cannot be abated under this act.

### DISCUSSION

In addition to the Commercial Rehabilitation Act (PA 210 of 2005), several other property tax abatements are available for the rehabilitation of commercial property in Michigan, including the Commercial Redevelopment Act (PA 255 of 1978) and the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (PA 146 of 2000). Each act has unique eligibility requirements, processes, and lengths and terms of the abatement. Please refer to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) fact sheet for more information on each program and consult the authorizing statute to determine the best fit for your project needs.

### SUPPORTING STATUTE

[Public Act 210 of 2005: Commercial Rehabilitation Act](#)

### CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the Commercial Rehabilitation Act, contact the [Community Assistance Team \(CAT\) specialist](#) assigned to your territory or visit [www.miplace.org](http://www.miplace.org).

## INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT (PA 198 of 1974, as amended)

Industrial property tax abatements provide incentives for eligible businesses to make new investments in Michigan. These abatements encourage Michigan manufacturers to build new plants, expand existing plants, renovate aging plants, or add new machinery and equipment. High technology operations are also eligible for the abatement.

High-technology activity is defined in the Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) Act as: advanced computing, advanced materials, biotechnology, electronic device technology, engineering or laboratory testing related to product research and development and advanced vehicles technology or technology that assists in the assessment or prevention of threats or damage to human health or the environment. Abatements under PA 198 can significantly reduce property taxes on new investment for eligible firms.

### ESTABLISHING THE DISTRICT

Tax benefits are granted by the legislative body of the city, township or village in which the investment will be located. A public hearing is held and a resolution is adopted to approve the establishment of an Industrial Development District (for a new project) or a Plant Rehabilitation District (for a rehabilitation project). A written request to establish the district must be filed with the clerk of the local unit of government prior to commencement of construction, alteration or installation of equipment.

Once the district is established, the company may apply for an abatement on real and personal property taxes for up to 12 years.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

Industrial property tax abatements must be approved at both the local and state levels. The eligible business files an application (Michigan Department of Treasury Form 1012) with the local clerk after the district has been established and no later than six months after commencement of the project. The local unit adopts a

resolution approving the application and determines the length of years for the abatement. After a local public hearing, the application is filed and reviewed by the State Tax Commission (STC) and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation<sup>SM</sup> (MEDC). The STC then grants final approval applications with required attachments must be received by the STC no later than October 31, in order to receive consideration and action by December 31.

Applications to the STC must include an agreement signed by the local unit and the operator of the facility outlining the conditions of the abatement. This shall include an affidavit that no payment of any kind in excess of the fee allowed under the act has been made or promised in exchange for favorable consideration of exemption application.

Once approved, the firm pays an Industrial Facilities Tax (IFT), instead of property tax, which reflects the abatement savings.

### ELIGIBLE FACILITIES

Industrial plants eligible for tax abatement are those that primarily manufacture or process goods or materials by physical or chemical change. Related facilities of Michigan manufacturers such as offices, engineering, research and development, warehousing or parts distribution are also eligible for exemption.

Research and development laboratories, high-tech facilities and large communication centers can qualify throughout Michigan.

Facilities used for warehousing, distribution or logistics purposes can be eligible if they locate in specific border counties. At least 90 percent of the property, excluding the surrounding green space, must be used for a warehouse, distribution, logistics or communication center and occupy a building or structure that is more than 100,000 square feet. Eligible border counties include

Berrien, Branch, Cass, Chippewa, Dickinson, Gogebic, Hillsdale, Iron, Lenawee, Menominee, Monroe, St. Clair, St. Joseph, and Wayne.

The exemption applies to buildings, building improvements, machinery, equipment, furniture and fixtures. Real and personal property are eligible whether owned or leased (provided the lessee is liable for payment of taxes on the property).

The exemption covers only the specific project that is the subject of the application. Any buildings and equipment that existed prior to construction of a new facility are not exempt. If the project is rehabilitation, the value of any pre-existing obsolete property is exempt from ad valorem property taxes, but will be used as the base for IFT. Similarly, any structures or equipment added after completion of the project are fully taxable.

## TAX IMPACT

### Real and Non-industrial

#### Personal Property IFT Treatment

The IFT on a new plant and non-industrial personal property, such as some high-tech personal property, is computed at half the local property tax mileage rate. This amounts to a reduction in property taxes of approximately 50 percent. In addition, the 6-mill SET may be abated 100 percent, 50 percent or not at all. Any SET abatement must be negotiated with the MEDC.

### Rehabilitation of Real or

#### Personal Property IFT Treatment

For an obsolete plant or machinery that is being replaced or restored, the IFT is frozen at the assessed value of the plant prior to improvement. This results in a 100 percent exemption from property tax on the value of the improvements.

### Speculative Building IFT Treatment

In order for a speculative building to qualify for abatement, the local unit must approve a resolution declaring it is a speculative building prior to identifying occupants. Initial construction and finishing costs would be eligible for a reduction in property taxes of approximately 50 percent.

### Commercial Personal Property Tax Relief

Commercial personal property will receive an automatic reduction of 12 mills for local school on their property tax bill.

### Extension Under Personal Property Tax Reform

Personal property abated under PA 198 and eligible in the future for the Personal Property Tax (PPT) exemption will automatically continue to be abated under PA 198 until that property may be claimed as exempt from the PPT in the current tax year. Businesses with IFT until the property becomes eligible for the PPT exemption.

For more information, contact the MEDC customer contact center at 517.373.9808 or visit our website at [www.michiganbusiness.org](http://www.michiganbusiness.org).