

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1479  
with Senate Amendments**

Fifty-seventh  
Legislative Assembly  
of North Dakota

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1479**

Introduced by

Representative R. Kelsch

(Approved by the Delayed Bills Committee)

1 A BILL for an Act to create and enact chapter 57-34.1 of the North Dakota Century Code,  
2 relating to the taxation of mobile telecommunications; and to provide an effective date.

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 57-34.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and  
5 enacted as follows:

6 **57-34.1-01. Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise  
7 requires:

- 8 1. "Charges for mobile telecommunications services" means any charge for or  
9 associated with the provision of commercial mobile radio service, as defined in  
10 section 20.3 of title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations as in effect on June 1,  
11 1999, or any charge for or associated with a service provided as an adjunct to a  
12 commercial mobile radio service which is billed to the customer by or for the  
13 customer's home service provider regardless of whether individual transmissions  
14 originate or terminate within the licensed service area of the home service  
15 provider.
- 16 2. "Customer" means the person that contracts with the home service provider for  
17 mobile telecommunications services or for the purpose of determining the place of  
18 primary use, if the end user of mobile telecommunications services is not the  
19 contracting party, the end user of the mobile telecommunications service. The  
20 term does not include a reseller of mobile telecommunications service or a serving  
21 carrier under an arrangement to serve the customer outside the home service  
22 provider's licensed service area.
- 23 3. "Enhanced zip code" means a United States postal zip code of nine or more digits.

- 1           4. "Home service provider" means the facilities-based carrier or reseller with which  
2           the customer contracts for the provision of mobile telecommunications services.
- 3           5. "Licensed service area" means the geographic area in which the home service  
4           provider is authorized by law or contract to provide commercial mobile radio  
5           service to the customer.
- 6           6. "Mobile telecommunications service" means commercial mobile radio service, as  
7           defined in section 20.3 of title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations as in effect on  
8           June 1, 1999.
- 9           7. "Place of primary use" means the street address representative of where the  
10          customer's use of the mobile telecommunications service primarily occurs, which  
11          must be the residential street address or the primary business street address of  
12          the customer and within the licensed service area of the home service provider.
- 13          8. "Prepaid telephone calling service" means the right to purchase exclusively  
14          telecommunications services that must be paid for in advance which enables the  
15          origination of calls using an access number, authorization code, or both, whether  
16          manually or electronically dialed, if the remaining amount of units of service that  
17          have been prepaid is known by the provider of the prepaid service on a continuous  
18          basis.
- 19          9. "Reseller" means a provider who purchases telecommunications services from  
20          another telecommunications service provider and then resells, uses as a  
21          component part of, or integrates the purchased services into a mobile  
22          telecommunications service and does not include a serving carrier with which a  
23          home service provider arranges for the services to its customers outside the home  
24          service provider's licensed service area.
- 25          10. "Serving carrier" means a facilities-based carrier providing mobile  
26          telecommunications service to a customer outside a home service provider's or  
27          reseller's licensed service area.
- 28          11. "Taxing jurisdiction" means this state or any political subdivision within this state,  
29          including those operating under a home rule charter, with the authority to impose a  
30          tax, charge, or fee.

31          **57-34.1-02. Application.**

- 1           1. This chapter applies to any tax, charge, or fee levied by a taxing jurisdiction as a  
2           fixed charge for each customer or measured by gross amounts charged to  
3           customers for mobile telecommunications services, regardless of whether the tax,  
4           charge, or fee is imposed on the vendor or customer of the service and regardless  
5           of the terminology used to describe the tax, charge, or fee.
- 6           2. This chapter does not apply to:
- 7           a. Any tax, charge, or fee levied upon or measured by the net income, capital  
8           stock, net worth, or property value of the provider of mobile  
9           telecommunications service.
- 10          b. Any tax, charge, or fee that is applied to an equitably apportioned amount that  
11          is not determined on a transactional basis.
- 12          c. Any tax, charge, or fee that represents compensation for a mobile  
13          telecommunications service provider's use of public rights of way or other  
14          public property, provided that the tax, charge, or fee is not levied by the taxing  
15          jurisdiction as a fixed charge for each customer or measured by gross  
16          amounts charged to customers for mobile telecommunication services.
- 17          d. Any generally applicable business and occupation tax that is imposed by this  
18          state, is applied to gross receipts or gross proceeds, is the legal liability of the  
19          home service provider, and that statutorily allows the home service provider  
20          to elect to use the sourcing method required in this chapter.
- 21          e. Any fee related to obligations under section 254 of the Communications Act of  
22          1934.
- 23          f. Any tax, charge, or fee imposed by the federal communications commission.
- 24          3. The provisions of this chapter:
- 25          a. Do not apply to the determination of the taxing situs of prepaid telephone  
26          calling services.
- 27          b. Do not affect the taxability of either the initial sale of mobile  
28          telecommunications services or subsequent resale of the services, whether  
29          as sales of the services alone or as a part of a bundled product, if the Internet  
30          Tax Freedom Act [Pub. L. 105-277; 112 Stat. 2681 et seq.] precludes a taxing

1 jurisdiction from subjecting the charges of the sale of the services to a tax,  
2 charge, or fee.

3 c. Do not apply to the determination of the taxing situs of air-ground  
4 radio-telephone service as defined in section 22.99 of title 47 of the Code of  
5 Federal Regulations as in effect on June 1, 1999.

6 **57-34.1-03. Sourcing rules for mobile telecommunications services.**

7 Notwithstanding any other provision of law or any ordinance or resolution of a political  
8 subdivision, including a political subdivision operating under a home rule charter, mobile  
9 telecommunications services provided in a taxing jurisdiction to a customer, the charges for  
10 which are billed by or for the customer's home service provider, are deemed to be provided by  
11 the customer's home service provider. All charges for mobile telecommunications services that  
12 are deemed to be provided by the customer's home service provider under this chapter are  
13 authorized to be subjected to tax, charge, or fee by the taxing jurisdictions whose territorial  
14 limits encompass the customer's place of primary use, regardless of where the mobile  
15 telecommunications services originate, terminate, or pass through, and no other taxing  
16 jurisdiction may impose taxes, charges, or fees on charges for the mobile telecommunications  
17 services.

18 **57-34.1-04. Electronic data base.**

19 1. A home service provider is to be held harmless from any tax, charge, or fee liability  
20 in this state that otherwise would be due solely as a result of an assignment of a  
21 street address to an incorrect taxing jurisdiction if, subject to subsection 4, the  
22 home service provider employs an enhanced zip code to assign each street  
23 address to a specific taxing jurisdiction for each level of taxing jurisdiction and  
24 exercises due diligence at each level of taxing jurisdiction to ensure that each  
25 street address is assigned to the correct taxing jurisdiction. If an enhanced zip  
26 code overlaps boundaries of taxing jurisdictions of the same level, the home  
27 service provider must designate one specific jurisdiction within the enhanced zip  
28 code for use in taxing the activity for the enhanced zip code for each level of taxing  
29 jurisdiction. Any enhanced zip code assignment changed in accordance with  
30 subsection 4 is in compliance with this subsection. For purposes of this

- 1 subsection, there is a rebuttable presumption that a home service provider has  
2 exercised due diligence if the home service provider demonstrates that it has:
- 3 a. Expended reasonable resources to implement and maintain an appropriately  
4 detailed electronic data base of street address assignments to taxing  
5 jurisdictions;
- 6 b. Implemented and maintained reasonable internal controls to promptly correct  
7 misassignments of street addresses to taxing jurisdictions; and
- 8 c. Used all reasonably obtainable and usable data pertaining to municipal  
9 annexations, incorporations, reorganizations, and any other changes in  
10 jurisdictional boundaries that materially affect the accuracy of the data base.
- 11 2. A home service provider is responsible for obtaining and maintaining the  
12 customer's place of primary use. Subject to subsection 4 and if the home service  
13 provider's reliance on information provided by its customer is in good faith, a taxing  
14 jurisdiction shall allow a home service provider to rely on the applicable residential  
15 or business street address supplied by the home service provider's customer and  
16 not hold a home service provider liable for any additional taxes, charges, or fees  
17 based on a different determination of the place of primary use for taxes, charges,  
18 or fees that are customarily passed on to the customer as a separate itemized  
19 charge.
- 20 3. Except as provided in subsection 4, a taxing jurisdiction shall allow a home service  
21 provider to treat the address used by the home service provider for tax purposes  
22 for any customer under a service contract or agreement in effect on or before  
23 July 28, 2002, as that customer's place of primary use for the remaining term of the  
24 service contract or agreement, excluding any extension or renewal of the service  
25 contract or agreement, for purposes of determining the taxing jurisdictions to which  
26 taxes, charges, or fees on charges for mobile telecommunications services are  
27 remitted.
- 28 4. A taxing jurisdiction or the state on behalf of any taxing jurisdiction may:
- 29 a. Determine that the address used for purposes of determining the taxing  
30 jurisdictions to which taxes, charges, or fees for mobile telecommunications  
31 services are remitted does not meet the definition of place of primary use and

- 1 give binding notice to the home service provider to change the place of  
2 primary use on a prospective basis from the date of notice of determination if  
3 the taxing jurisdiction making the determination is not the state, the taxing  
4 jurisdiction obtains the consent of all affected taxing jurisdictions within this  
5 state before giving the notice of determination, and before the taxing  
6 jurisdiction gives the notice of determination, the customer is given an  
7 opportunity to demonstrate in accordance with applicable state or local tax,  
8 charge, or fee administrative procedures that the address is the customer's  
9 place of primary use.
- 10 b. Determine that the assignment of a taxing jurisdiction by a home service  
11 provider under subsection 1 does not reflect the correct taxing jurisdiction and  
12 give binding notice to the home service provider to change the assignment on  
13 a prospective basis from the date of notice of determination if the taxing  
14 jurisdiction making the determination is not the state, the taxing jurisdiction  
15 obtains the consent of all affected taxing jurisdictions within the state before  
16 giving the notice of determination and the home service provider is given an  
17 opportunity to demonstrate in accordance with applicable state or local tax,  
18 charge, or fee administrative procedures that the assignment reflects the  
19 correct taxing jurisdiction.
- 20 5. Nothing in this chapter modifies, impairs, supersedes, or authorizes the  
21 modification, impairment, or supersession of, any law allowing a taxing jurisdiction  
22 to collect a tax, charge, or fee from a customer that has failed to provide its place  
23 of primary use.
- 24 6. If a taxing jurisdiction does not otherwise subject charges for mobile  
25 telecommunications services to taxation and if these charges are aggregated with  
26 and not separately stated from charges that are subject to taxation, then the  
27 charges for nontaxable mobile telecommunications services may be subject to  
28 taxation unless the home service provider can reasonably identify charges not  
29 subject to the tax, charge, or fee from its books and records that are kept in the  
30 regular course of business.

1           7. If a taxing jurisdiction does not subject charges for mobile telecommunications  
2           services to taxation, a customer may not rely upon the nontaxability of charges for  
3           mobile telecommunications services unless the customer's home service provider  
4           separately states the charges for nontaxable mobile telecommunications services  
5           from taxable charges or the home service provider elects, after receiving a written  
6           request from the customer in the form required by the provider, to provide  
7           verifiable data based upon the home service provider's books and records that are  
8           kept in the regular course of business that reasonably identifies the nontaxable  
9           charges.

10           **57-34.1-05. Customer's procedures and remedies for correcting taxes and fees.**

11           1. If a customer believes that an amount of tax, assignment of place of primary use,  
12           or taxing jurisdiction included on a billing is erroneous, the customer shall notify the  
13           home service provider in writing. The customer shall include in this written  
14           notification the street address for the customer's place of primary use, the account  
15           name and number for which the customer seeks a correction of the tax  
16           assignment, a description of the error asserted by the customer, and any other  
17           information the home service provider reasonably requires to process the request.  
18           Within sixty days of receiving a notice, the home service provider shall review its  
19           records and the electronic data base or enhanced zip code to determine the  
20           customer's taxing jurisdiction. If as a result of this review the home service  
21           provider finds that the amount of tax, assignment of place of primary use, or taxing  
22           jurisdiction is in error, the home service provider shall correct the error and refund  
23           or credit the amount of tax erroneously collected from the customer for a period of  
24           up to two years. If this review shows that the amount of tax, assignment of place  
25           of primary use, or taxing jurisdiction is correct, the home service provider shall  
26           provide a written explanation to the customer.

27           2. If the customer is dissatisfied with the response of the home service provider under  
28           this section, the customer may seek correction or refund from the taxing  
29           jurisdiction affected.

30           3. The procedure in this section is the sole and exclusive remedy available to  
31           customers seeking correction of assignment of place of primary use, taxing

1 jurisdiction, a refund, or other compensation for taxes or fees erroneously collected  
2 by the home service provider.

3 **57-34.1-06. Nonseverability.** If a court of competent jurisdiction enters a final  
4 judgment on the merits that is based on federal law, is no longer subject to appeal, and  
5 substantially limits or impairs the essential elements of the Mobile Telecommunications  
6 Sourcing Act [Pub. L. 106-252; 114 Stat. 626], then the provisions of this chapter are invalid  
7 and have no legal effect as of the date of entry of the judgment.

8 **SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Act becomes effective for customer bills issued  
9 on or after August 1, 2002.