



REVENUE AND TAXATION POLICY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 15, 2021
9:00 am – 10:30 am

Register for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUocu-sqTsvH9lw5hiKlwS3d6vcexZVCTt6>

Immediately after registering, you will receive a link and confirmation email to join the meeting.

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AGENDA

- I. Welcome**
- II. Public Comment**
- III. Legislative Update** *Informational*
- IV. Annual Conference Resolution No. 1:** *Action*
Fair And Equitable Distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% Local Sales Tax from In-State Online Purchases (Attachment A)
Letters of Concurrence Received After July 24 Deadline (Attachment B)
- V. Adjourn**

2022 Policy Committee Appointments

REMINDER: The 2021 policy committee appointments will end at the close of the Annual Conference; appointments for 2022 can be requested thereafter.

Brown Act Reminder: The League of California Cities' Board of Directors has a policy of complying with the spirit of open meeting laws. Generally, off-agenda items may be taken up only if:

- 1. Two-thirds of the policy committee members find a need for immediate action exists and the need to take action came to the attention of the policy committee after the agenda was prepared (Note: If fewer than two-thirds of policy committee members are present, taking up an off-agenda item requires a unanimous vote); or*
- 2. A majority of the policy committee finds an emergency (for example: work stoppage or disaster) exists.*

A majority of a city council may not, consistent with the Brown Act, discuss specific substantive issues among themselves at Cal Cities meetings. Any such discussion is subject to the Brown Act and must occur in a meeting that complies with its requirements.

1. RESOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES (“CAL CITIES”) CALLING ON THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT PROVIDES FOR A FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BRADLEY BURNS 1% LOCAL SALES TAX FROM IN-STATE ONLINE PURCHASES, BASED ON DATA WHERE PRODUCTS ARE SHIPPED TO, AND THAT RIGHTFULLY TAKES INTO CONSIDERATION THE IMPACTS THAT FULFILLMENT CENTERS HAVE ON HOST CITIES BUT ALSO PROVIDES A FAIR SHARE TO CALIFORNIA CITIES THAT DO NOT AND/OR CANNOT HAVE A FULFILLMENT CENTER WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION

Source: City of Rancho Cucamonga

Concurrence of five or more cities/city officials:

Cities: Town of Apple Valley; City of El Cerrito; City of La Canada Flintridge; City of La Verne; City of Lakewood; City of Moorpark; City of Placentia; City of Sacramento

Referred to: Revenue and Taxation Policy Committee

WHEREAS, the 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Wayfair v. South Dakota* clarified that states could charge and collect tax on purchases even if the seller does not have a physical presence in the state; and

WHEREAS, California cities and counties collect 1% in Bradley Burns sales and use tax from the purchase of tangible personal property and rely on this revenue to provide critical public services such as police and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, in terms of “siting” the place of sale and determining which jurisdiction receives the 1% Bradley Burns local taxes for online sales, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) determines “out-of-state” online retailers as those with no presence in California that ship property from outside the state and are therefore subject to use tax, not sales tax, which is collected in a countywide pool of the jurisdiction where the property is shipped from; and

WHEREAS, for online retailers that have a presence in California and have a stock of goods in the state from which it fulfills orders, CDTFA considers the place of sale (“situs”) as the location from which the goods were shipped such as a fulfillment center; and

WHEREAS, in early 2021, one of the state’s largest online retailers shifted its ownership structure so that it is now considered both an in-state and out-of-state retailer, resulting in the sales tax this retailer generates from in-state sales now being entirely allocated to the specific city where the warehouse fulfillment center is located as opposed to going into a countywide pool that is shared with all jurisdictions in that County, as was done previously; and

WHEREAS, this all-or-nothing change for the allocation of in-state sales tax has created winners and losers amongst cities as the online sales tax revenue from the retailer that was once spread amongst all cities in countywide pools is now concentrated in select cities that host a fulfillment center; and

WHEREAS, this has created a tremendous inequity amongst cities, in particular for cities that are built out, do not have space for siting a 1 million square foot fulfillment center, are not located along a major travel corridor, or otherwise not ideally suited to host a fulfillment center; and

WHEREAS, this inequity affects cities statewide, but in particular those with specific circumstances such as no/low property tax cities that are extremely reliant on sales tax revenue as well as cities struggling to meet their RHNA obligations that are being compelled by the State to rezone precious commercial parcels to residential; and

WHEREAS, the inequity produced by allocating in-state online sales tax revenue exclusively to cities with fulfillment centers is exasperated even more by, in addition to already reducing the amount of revenue going into the countywide pools, the cities with fulfillment centers are also receiving a larger share of the dwindling countywide pool as it is allocated based on cities' proportional share of sales tax collected; and

WHEREAS, while it is important to acknowledge that those cities that have fulfillment centers experience impacts from these activities and deserve equitable supplementary compensation, it should also be recognized that the neighboring cities whose residents are ordering product from that center now receive no revenue from the center's sales activity despite also experiencing the impacts created by the center, such as increased traffic and air pollution; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly accelerated the public's shift towards online purchases, a trend that is unlikely to be reversed to pre-pandemic levels; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Cal Cities calls on the State Legislature to pass legislation that provides for a fair and equitable distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% local sales tax from in-state online purchases, based on data where products are shipped to, and that rightfully takes into consideration the impacts that fulfillment centers have on host cities but also provides a fair share to California cities that do not and/or cannot have a fulfillment center within their jurisdiction.

Background Information to Resolution

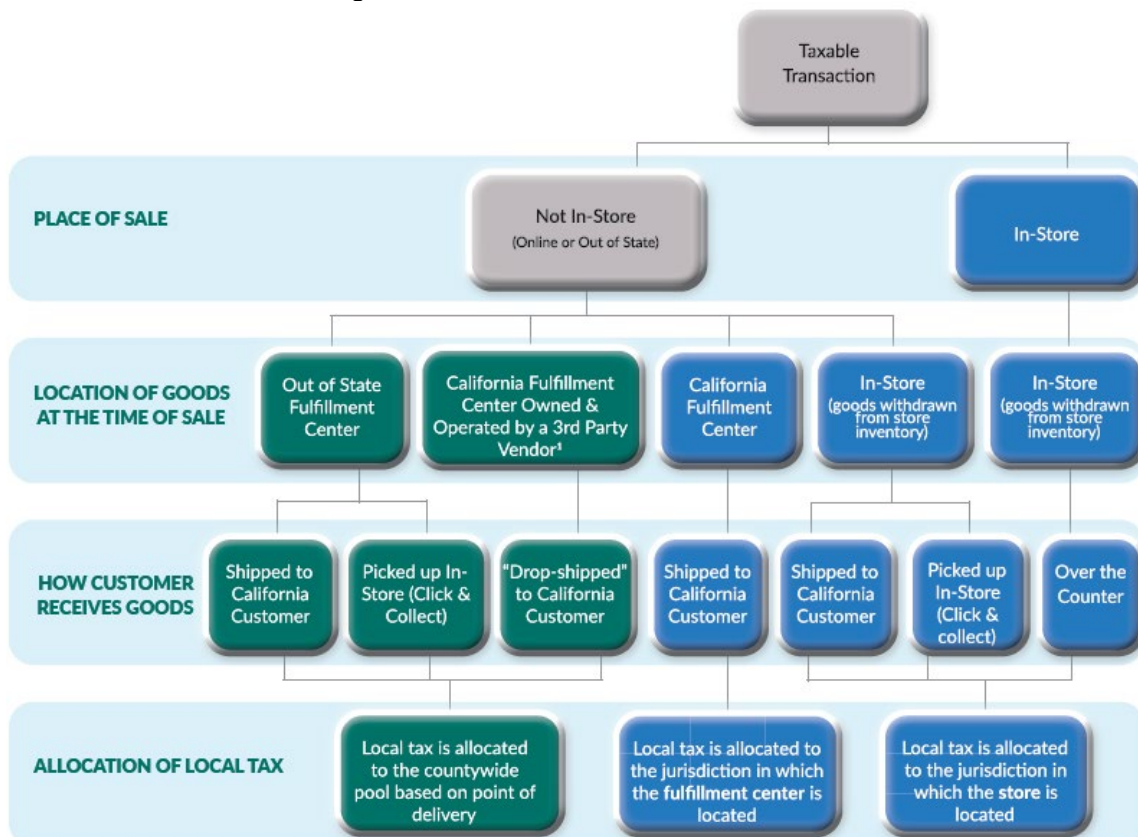
Source: City of Rancho Cucamonga

Background:

Sales tax is a major revenue source for most California cities. Commonly known as the local 1% Bradley-Burns tax, since the 1950's, cities have traditionally received 1 cent on every dollar of a sale made at the store, restaurant, car dealer, or other location within a jurisdiction's boundaries.

Over the years, however, this simple tax structure has evolved into a much more complex set of laws and allocation rules. Many of these rules relate to whether or not a given transaction is subject to sales tax, or to use tax – both have the same 1% value, but each applies in separate circumstances. The California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) is responsible for administering this system and issuing rules regarding how it is applied in our state.

The following chart created by HdL Companies, the leading provider of California sales tax consulting, illustrates the complex structure of how sales and use tax allocation is done in California, depending on where the transaction starts, where the goods are located, and how the customer receives the goods:



¹ In this scenario the retailer does not own a stock of goods in California and sales orders are negotiated/processed out of state. An out of state company is not required to hold a seller's permit for an in-state third party warehouse if they do not own a stock of goods at the time of sale.

With the exponential growth of online sales and the corresponding lack of growth, and even decline, of shopping at brick and mortar locations, cities are seeing much of their sales tax

growth coming from the countywide sales tax pools, since much of the sales tax is now funneled to the pools.

Recently, one of the world's largest online retailers changed the legal ownership of its fulfillment centers. Instead of having its fulfillment centers owned and operated by a third-party vendor, they are now directly owned by the company. This subtle change has major impacts to how the 1% local tax is allocated. Following the chart above, previously much of the sales tax would have followed the green boxes on the chart and been allocated to the countywide pool based on point of delivery. Now, much of the tax is following the blue path through the chart and is allocated to the jurisdiction in which the fulfillment center is located. (It should be noted that some of the tax is still flowing to the pools, in those situations where the fulfillment center is shipping goods for another seller that is out of state.)

This change has created a situation where most cities in California – more than 90%, in fact – are experiencing a sales tax revenue loss that began in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2021. Many cities may not be aware of this impact, as the fluctuations in sales tax following the pandemic shutdowns have masked the issue. But this change will have long-term impacts on revenues for all California cities as all these revenues benefiting all cities have shifted to just a handful of cities and counties that are home to this retailer's fulfillment centers.

This has brought to light again the need to address the issues in how sales and use taxes are distributed in the 21st century. Many, if not most cities will never have the opportunity have a warehouse fulfillment center due to lack of space or not being situated along a major travel corridor. These policies especially favor retailers who may leverage current policy in order to negotiate favorable sales tax sharing agreements, providing more money back to the retailer at the expense of funding critical public services.

With that stated, it is important to note the many impacts to the jurisdictions home to the fulfillment centers. These centers do support the ecommerce most of us as individuals have come to rely on, including heavy wear and tear on streets – one truck is equal to about 8,000 cars when it comes to impact on pavement – and increased air pollution due to the truck traffic and idling diesel engines dropping off large loads. However, it is equally important that State policies acknowledge that entities without fulfillment centers also experience impacts from ecommerce and increased deliveries. Cities whose residents are ordering products that are delivered to their doorstep also experience impacts from traffic, air quality and compromised safety, as well as the negative impact on brick-and-mortar businesses struggling to compete with the sharp increase in online shopping. These cities are rightfully entitled to compensation in an equitable share of sales and use tax. We do not believe that online sales tax distribution between fulfillment center cities and other cities should be an all or nothing endeavor, and not necessarily a fifty-fifty split, either. But we need to find an equitable split that balances the impacts to each jurisdiction involved in the distribution of products purchased online.

Over the years, Cal Cities has had numerous discussions about the issues surrounding sales tax in the modern era, and how state law and policy should be revisited to address these issues. It is a heavy lift, as all of our cities are impacted a bit differently, making consensus difficult. We believe that by once again starting the conversation and moving toward the development of laws and policies that can result in seeing all cities benefit from the growth taxes generated through online sales, our state will be stronger.

It is for these reasons, that we should all aspire to develop an equitable sales tax distribution for online sales.

League of California Cities Staff Analysis on Resolution No. 1

Staff: Nicholas Romo, Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist

Committee: Revenue and Taxation

Summary:

This Resolution calls on the League of California Cities (Cal Cities) to request the Legislature to pass legislation that provides for a fair and equitable distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% local sales tax from in-state online purchases, based on data where products are shipped to, and that rightfully takes into consideration the impacts that fulfillment centers have on host cities but also provides a fair share to California cities that do not and/or cannot have a fulfillment center within their jurisdiction.

Background:

The City of Rancho Cucamonga is sponsoring this resolution to “*address the issues in how sales and use taxes are distributed in the 21st century.*”

The City notes that “*sales tax is a major revenue source for most California cities. Commonly known as the local 1% Bradley-Burns tax, since the 1950’s, cities have traditionally received 1 cent on every dollar of a sale made at the store, restaurant, car dealer, or other location within a jurisdiction’s boundaries. Over the years, however, this simple tax structure has evolved into a much more complex set of laws and allocation rules. Many of these rules relate to whether or not a given transaction is subject to sales tax, or to use tax – both have the same 1% value, but each applies in separate circumstances.*”

Recently, one of the world’s largest online retailers changed the legal ownership of its fulfillment centers. Instead of having its fulfillment centers owned and operated by a third-party vendor, they are now directly owned by the company. This subtle change has major impacts to how the 1% local tax is allocated.

This change has created a situation where most cities in California – more than 90%, in fact – are experiencing a sales tax revenue loss that began in the fourth quarter of calendar year 2021. Many cities may not be aware of this impact, as the fluctuations in sales tax following the pandemic shutdowns have masked the issue. But this change will have long-term impacts on revenues for all California cities as all these revenues benefiting all cities have shifted to just a handful of cities and counties that are home to this retailer’s fulfillment centers.”

The City’s resolution calls for action on an unspecified solution that “*rightfully takes into consideration the impacts that fulfillment centers have on host cities but also provides a fair share to California cities that do not and/or cannot have a fulfillment center within their jurisdiction,*” which aims to acknowledge the actions taken by cities to alleviate poverty, catalyze economic development, and improve financial stability within their communities through existing tax sharing and zoning powers.

Ultimately, sponsoring cities believe *“that by once again starting the conversation and moving toward the development of laws and policies that can result in seeing all cities benefit from the growth taxes generated through online sales, our state will be stronger.”*

Sales and Use Tax in California

The Bradley-Burns Uniform Sales Tax Act allows all local agencies to apply its own sales and use tax on the same base of tangible personal property (taxable goods). This tax rate currently is fixed at 1.25% of the sales price of taxable goods sold at retail locations in a local jurisdiction, or purchased outside the jurisdiction for use within the jurisdiction. Cities and counties use this 1% of the tax to support general operations, while the remaining 0.25% is used for county transportation purposes.

In California, all cities and counties impose Bradley-Burns sales taxes. California imposes the sales tax on every retailer engaged in business in this state that sells taxable goods. The law requires businesses to collect the appropriate tax from the purchaser and remit the amount to the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA). Sales tax applies whenever a retail sale is made, which is basically any sale other than one for resale in the regular course of business. Unless the person pays the sales tax to the retailer, they are liable for the use tax, which is imposed on any person consuming taxable goods in the state. The use tax rate is the same rate as the sales tax rate.

Generally, CDTFA distributes Bradley-Burns tax revenue based on where a sale took place, known as a *situs-based system*. A retailer’s physical place of business—such as a retail store or restaurant—is generally the place of sale. “Sourcing” is the term used by tax practitioners to describe the rules used to determine the place of sale, and therefore, which tax rates are applied to a given purchase and which jurisdictions are entitled to the local and district taxes generated from a particular transaction.

California is primarily an origin-based sourcing state – meaning tax revenues go to the jurisdiction in which a transaction physically occurs if that can be determined. However, California also uses a form of destination sourcing for the local use tax and for district taxes (also known as “transactions and use taxes” or “add-on sale and use taxes”). That is, for cities with local add-on taxes, they receive their add-on rate amount from remote and online transactions.

Generally, allocations are based on the following rules:

- The sale is sourced to the place of business of the seller - whether the product is received by the purchaser at the seller’s business location or not.
- If the retailer maintains inventory in California and has no other in state location, the source is the jurisdiction where the warehouse is situated. *This resolution is concerned with the growing amount of online retail activity being sourced to cities with warehouse/fulfillment center locations.*
- If the business’ sales office is located in California but the merchandise is shipped from out of state, the tax from transactions under \$500,000 is allocated

via the county pools. The tax from transactions over \$500,000 is allocated to the jurisdiction where the merchandise is delivered.

- When a sale cannot be identified with a permanent place of business in the state, the sale is sourced to the allocation pool of the county where the merchandise was delivered and then distributed among all jurisdictions in that county in proportion to ratio of sales. *For many large online retailers, this has been the traditional path.*

Online Sales and Countywide Pools

While the growth of e-commerce has been occurring for more than two decades, led by some of the largest and most popular retailers in the world, the dramatic increase in online shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided significant revenue to California cities as well as a clearer picture on which governments enjoy even greater benefits.

In the backdrop of booming internet sales has been the steady decline of brick-and-mortar retail and shopping malls. For cities with heavy reliance on in-person retail shopping, the value of the current allocation system has been diminished as their residents prefer to shop online or are incentivized to do so by retailers (during the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have had no other option but to shop online for certain goods). All the while, the demands and costs of city services continue to grow for cities across the state.

As noted above, the allocation of sales tax revenue to local governments depends on the location of the transaction (or where the location is ultimately determined). For in-person retail, the sales tax goes to the city in which the product and store are located - a customer purchasing at a register. For online sales, the Bradley Burns sales tax generally goes to a location other than the one where the customer lives – either to the city or county where an in-state warehouse or fulfillment center is located, the location of in-state sales office (ex. headquarters) or shared as use tax proceeds amongst all local governments within a county based on their proportionate share of taxable sales.

Under current CDTFA regulations, a substantial portion of local use tax collections are allocated through a countywide pool to the local jurisdictions in the county where the property is put to its first functional use. The state and county pools constitute over 15% of local sales and use tax revenues. Under the pool system, the tax is reported by the taxpayer to the countywide pool of use and then distributed to each jurisdiction in that county on a pro-rata share of taxable sales. If the county of use cannot be identified, the revenues are distributed to the state pool for pro-rata distribution on a statewide basis.

Concentration of Online Sales Tax Revenue and Modernization

Sales tax modernization has been a policy goal of federal, state, and local government leaders for decades to meet the rapidly changing landscape of commercial activity and ensure that all communities can sustainably provide critical services.

For as long as remote and internet shopping has existed, policy makers have been concerned about their potential to disrupt sales and use tax allocation procedures that underpin the funding of local government services. The system was designed in the early twentieth century to ensure that customers were paying sales taxes to support local government services within the community where the transactions occurred whether they resided there or not. This structure provides benefit to and recoupment for the public resources necessary to ensure the health and safety of the community broadly.

City leaders have for as long been concerned about the loosening of the nexus between what their residents purchase and the revenues they receive. Growing online shopping, under existing sourcing rules, has led to a growing concentration of sales tax revenue being distributed to a smaller number of cities and counties. As more medium and large online retailers take title to fulfillment centers or determine specific sales locations in California as a result of tax sharing agreements in specific cities, online sales tax revenue will be ever more concentrated in a few cities at the control of these companies. Furthermore, local governments are already experiencing the declining power of the sales tax to support services as more money is being spent on non-taxable goods and services.

For more on sales and use tax sourcing please see Attachment A.

State Auditor Recommendations

In 2017, the California State Auditor issued a report titled, "[The Bradley-Burns Tax and Local Transportation Funds](#)", noting that:

“Retailers generally allocate Bradley Burns tax revenue based on the place of sale, which they identify according to their business structure. However, retailers that make sales over the Internet may allocate sales to various locations, including their warehouses, distribution center, or sales offices. This approach tends to concentrate Bradley Burns tax revenue into the warehouses’ or sales offices’ respective jurisdictions. Consequently, counties with a relatively large amount of industrial space may receive disproportionately larger amounts of Bradley Burns tax, and therefore Local Transportation Fund, revenue.

The State could make its distribution of Bradley Burns tax revenue derived from online sales more equitable if it based allocations of the tax on the destinations to which goods are shipped rather than on place of sale.”

The Auditor’s report makes the following recommendation:

“To ensure that Bradley-Burns tax revenue is more evenly distributed, the Legislature should amend the Bradley-Burns tax law to allocate revenues from Internet sales based on the destination of sold goods rather than their place of sale.”

In acknowledgement of the growing attention from outside groups on this issue, Cal Cities has been engaged in its own study and convening of city officials to ensure pursued solutions account for the circumstances of all cities and local control is best protected. These efforts are explored in subsequent sections.

Cal Cities Revenue and Taxation Committee and City Manager Working Group

In 2015 and 2016, Cal Cities' Revenue and Taxation Policy Committee held extensive discussions on potential modernization of tax policy affecting cities, with a special emphasis on the sales tax. The issues had been identified by Cal Cities leadership as a strategic priority given concerns in the membership about the eroding sales tax base and the desire for Cal Cities to take a leadership role in addressing the associated issues. The policy committee ultimately adopted a series of policies that were approved by the Cal Cities board of directors. Among its changes were a recommended change to existing sales tax sourcing (determining where a sale occurs) rules, so that the point of sale (situs) is where the customer receives the product. The policy also clarifies that specific proposals in this area should be carefully reviewed so that the impacts of any changes are fully understood. See "Existing Cal Cities Policy" section below.

Cal Cities City Manager Sales Tax Working Group Recommendations

In the Fall of 2017, the Cal Cities City Managers Department convened a working group (Group) of city managers representing a diverse array of cities to review and consider options for addressing issues affecting the local sales tax.

The working group of city managers helped Cal Cities identify internal common ground on rapidly evolving e-commerce trends and their effects on the allocation of local sales and use tax revenue. After meeting extensively throughout 2018, the Group made several recommendations that were endorsed unanimously by Cal Cities' Revenue and Taxation Committee at its January, 2019 meeting and by the board of directors at its subsequent meeting.

The Group recommended the following actions in response to the evolving issues associated with e-commerce and sales and use tax:

Further Limiting Rebate Agreements: The consensus of the Group was that:

- Sales tax rebate agreements involving online retailers should be prohibited *going forward*. They are inappropriate because they have the effect of encouraging revenue to be shifted away from numerous communities and concentrated to the benefit of one.
- Any type of agreement that seeks to lure a retailer from one community to another within a market area should also be prohibited *going forward*. Existing law already prohibits such agreements for auto dealers and big box stores.

Shift Use Tax from Online Sales, including from the South Dakota v. Wayfair Decision Out of County Pools: The Group's recommendation is based first on the principle of "situs" and that revenue should be allocated to the jurisdiction where the use occurs. Each city and county in California imposed a Bradley Burns sales and use tax rate

under state law in the 1950s. The use tax on a transaction is the rate imposed where the purchaser resides (the destination). These use tax dollars, including new revenue from the South Dakota v. Wayfair decision, should be allocated to the destination jurisdiction whose Bradley Burns tax applies and not throughout the entire county.

- Shift of these revenues, from purchases from out of state retailers including transactions captured by the South Dakota v. Wayfair decision, out of county pools to full destination allocation on and after January 1, 2020.
- Allow more direct reporting of use taxes related to construction projects to jurisdiction where the construction activity is located by reducing existing regulatory threshold from \$5 million to \$100,000.

Request/Require CDTFA Analysis on Impacts of Sales Tax Destination Shifts: After discussion of numerous phase-in options for destination sourcing and allocation for sales taxes, the Group ultimately decided that a more complete analysis was needed to sufficiently determine impacts. Since the two companies most cities rely on for sales tax analysis, HdL and MuniServices, were constrained to modeling with transaction and use tax (district tax) data, concerns centered on the problem of making decisions without adequate information. Since the CDTFA administers the allocation of local sales and use taxes, it is in the best position to produce an analysis that examines:

- The impacts on individual agencies of a change in sourcing rules. This would likely be accomplished by developing a model to examine 100% destination sourcing with a report to the Legislature in early 2020.
- The model should also attempt to distinguish between business-to-consumer transactions versus business-to-business transactions.
- The model should analyze the current number and financial effects of city and county sales tax rebate agreements with online retailers and how destination sourcing might affect revenues under these agreements.

Conditions for considering a Constitutional Amendment that moves toward destination allocation: Absent better data on the impacts on individual agencies associated with a shift to destination allocation of sales taxes from CDTFA, the Group declined to prescribe if/how a transition to destination would be accomplished; the sentiment was that the issue was better revisited once better data was available. In anticipation that the data would reveal significant negative impacts on some agencies, the Group desired that any such shift should be accompanied by legislation broadening of the base of sales taxes, including as supported by existing Cal Cities policy including:

- Broadening the tax base on goods, which includes reviewing existing exemptions on certain goods and expanding to digital forms of goods that are otherwise taxed; and
- Expanding the sales tax base to services, such as those commonly taxed in other states.

This Resolution builds upon previous work that accounts for the impacts that distribution networks have on host cities and further calls on the organization to advocate for changes to sales tax distribution rules.

The Resolution places further demands on data collected by CDTFA to establish a “fair and equitable distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% local sales tax from in-state online purchases.” Such data is proposed to be collected by [SB 792 \(Glazer, 2021\)](#). More discussion on this topic can be found in the “Staff Comments” section.

Staff Comments:

Proposed Resolution Affixes Equity Based, Data Driven Approach to Existing Cal Cities Policy on Sales Tax Sourcing

The actions resulting from this resolution, if approved, would align with existing policy and efforts to-date to modernize sales tax rules. While not formalized in existing Cal Cities policy or recommendations, city managers and tax practitioners generally have favored proposals that establish a sharing of online sales tax revenues rather than a full destination shift. City leaders and practitioners across the state have acknowledged during Cal Cities Revenue and Taxation and City Manager’s working group meetings that the hosting of fulfillment centers and ancillary infrastructure pose major burdens on local communities including detrimental health and safety impacts. This acknowledgement has moved mainstream proposals such as this one away from full revenue shifts towards an equity-based, data driven approach that favors revenue sharing. This Resolution would concretely affix this approach as Cal Cities policy.

More Data is Needed to Achieve Equity Based Approach

A major challenge is the lack of adequate data to model the results of shifting in-state online sale tax revenues. Local government tax consultants and state departments have limited data to model the effects of changes to sales tax distribution because their information is derived only from cities that have a local transactions and use tax (TUT). Tax experts are able to model proposed tax shifts using TUTs since they are allocated on a destination basis (where a purchaser receives the product; usually a home or business). However, more than half of all cities, including some larger cities, do not have a local TUT therefore modeling is constrained and incomplete.

Efforts to collect relevant sales tax information on the destination of products purchased online are ongoing. The most recent effort is encapsulated in [SB 792 \(Glazer, 2021\)](#), which would require retailers with online sales exceeding \$50 million a year to report to CDTFA the gross receipts from online sales that resulted in a product being shipped or delivered in each city. The availability of this data would allow for a much more complete understanding of online consumer behavior and the impacts of future proposed changes to distribution. SB 792 (Glazer) is supported by Cal Cities following approval by the Revenue and Taxation Committee and board of directors.

Impact of Goods Movement Must Be Considered

As noted above, city leaders and practitioners across the state acknowledge that the hosting of fulfillment centers and goods movement infrastructure pose major burdens on local communities including detrimental health, safety, and infrastructure impacts. Not least of which is the issue of air pollution from diesel exhaust. According to California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA):

“Children and those with existing respiratory disease, particularly asthma, appear to be especially susceptible to the harmful effects of exposure to airborne PM from diesel exhaust, resulting in increased asthma symptoms and attacks along with decreases in lung function (McCreanor et al., 2007; Wargo, 2002). People that live or work near heavily-traveled roadways, ports, railyards, bus yards, or trucking distribution centers may experience a high level of exposure (US EPA, 2002; Krivoshto et al., 2008). People that spend a significant amount of time near heavily-traveled roadways may also experience a high level of exposure. Studies of both men and women demonstrate cardiovascular effects of diesel PM exposure, including coronary vasoconstriction and premature death from cardiovascular disease (Krivoshto et al., 2008). A recent study of diesel exhaust inhalation by healthy non-smoking adults found an increase in blood pressure and other potential triggers of heart attack and stroke (Krishnan et al., 2013) Exposure to diesel PM, especially following periods of severe air pollution, can lead to increased hospital visits and admissions due to worsening asthma and emphysema-related symptoms (Krivoshto et al., 2008). Diesel exposure may also lead to reduced lung function in children living in close proximity to roadways (Brunekreef et al., 1997).”

The founded health impacts of the ubiquitous presence of medium and heavy-duty diesel trucks used to transport goods to and from fulfillment centers and warehouses require host cities to meet increased needs of their residents including the building and maintenance of buffer zones, parks, and open space. While pollution impacts may decline with the introduction of zero-emission vehicles, wide scale adoption by large distribution fleets is still in its infancy. Furthermore, the impacts of heavy road use necessitate increased spending on local streets and roads upgrades and maintenance. In addition, many cities have utilized the siting of warehouses, fulfillment centers, and other heavy industrial uses for goods movements as key components of local revenue generation and economic development strategies. These communities have also foregone other land uses in favor of siting sales offices and fulfillment networks.

All said, however, it is important to acknowledge that disadvantaged communities (DACs) whether measured along poverty, health, environmental or education indices exist in cities across the state. For one example, see: [California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment \(OEHHA\) CalEnviroScreen](#). City officials may consider how cities without fulfillment and warehouse center revenues are to fund efforts to combat social and economic issues, particularly in areas with low property tax and tourism-based revenues.

The Resolution aims to acknowledge these impacts broadly (this analysis does not provide an exhaustive review of related impacts) and requests Cal Cities to account for them in a revised distribution formula of the Bradley Burns 1% local sales tax from in-state online purchases. The Resolution does not prescribe the proportions.

Clarifying Amendments

Upon review of the Resolution, Cal Cities staff recommends technical amendments to provide greater clarity. *To review the proposed changes, please see Attachment B.*

Fiscal Impact:

Significant but unknown. The Resolution on its own does not shift sales tax revenues. In anticipation and mitigation of impacts, the Resolution requests Cal Cities to utilize online sales tax data to identify a fair and equitable distribution formula that accounts for the broad impacts fulfillment centers involved in online retail have on the cities that host them. The Resolution does not prescribe the revenue distribution split nor does it prescribe the impacts, positive and negative, of distribution networks.

Existing Cal Cities Policy:

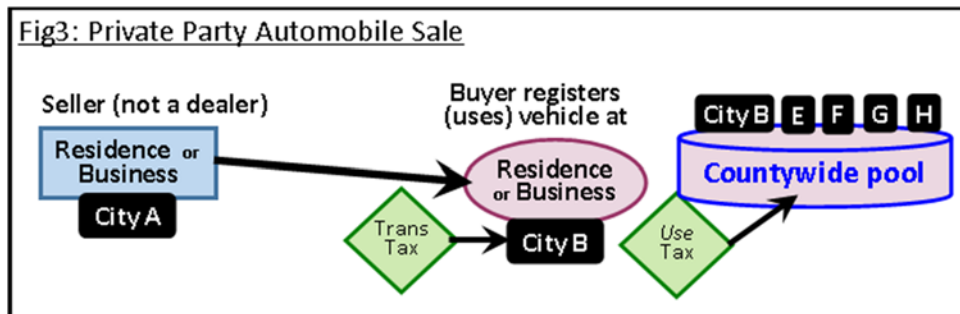
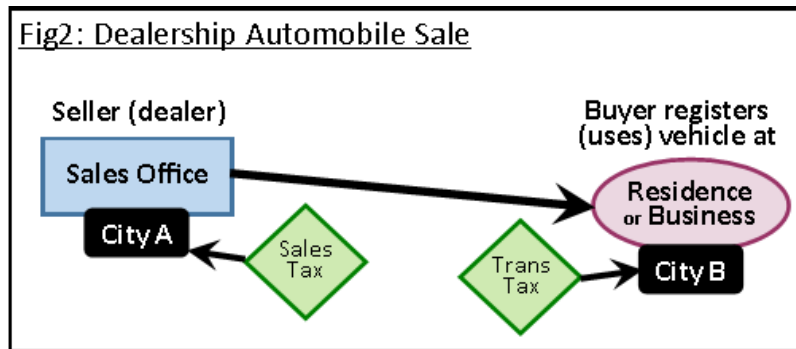
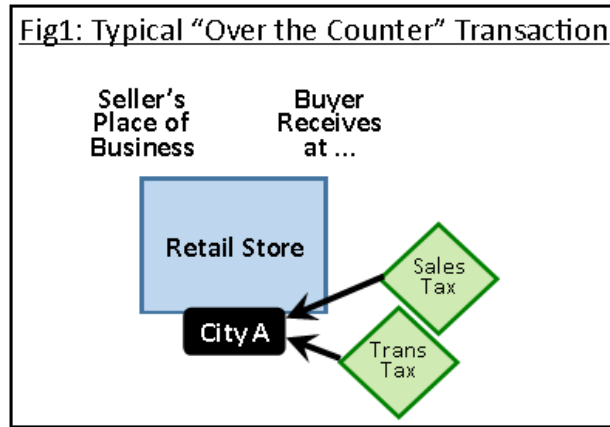
- Tax proceeds collected from internet sales should be allocated to the location where the product is received by the purchaser.
- Support as Cal Cities policy that point of sale (situs) is where the customer receives the product. Specific proposals in this area should be carefully reviewed so that the impacts of any changes are fully understood.
- Revenue from new regional or state taxes or from increased sales tax rates should be distributed in a way that reduces competition for situs-based revenue. (Revenue from the existing sales tax rate and base, including future growth from increased sales or the opening of new retail centers, should continue to be returned to the point of sale.)
- The existing situs-based sales tax under the Bradley Burns 1% baseline should be preserved and protected.
- Restrictions should be implemented and enforced to prohibit the enactment of agreements designed to circumvent the principle of situs-based sales and redirect or divert sales tax revenues from other communities, when the physical location of the affected businesses does not change. Sales tax rebate agreements involving online retailers are inappropriate because they have the effect of encouraging revenue to be shifted away from numerous communities and concentrated to the benefit of one. Any type of agreement that seeks to lure a retailer from one community to another within a market area should also be prohibited going forward.
- Support Cal Cities working with the state California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) to update the county pool allocation process to ensure that more revenues are allocated to the jurisdiction where the purchase or first use of a product occurs (usually where the product is delivered). Use Tax collections from online sales, including from the South Dakota v Wayfair Decision, should be shifted out of county pools and allocated to the destination jurisdiction whose Bradley Burns tax applies and not throughout the entire county.

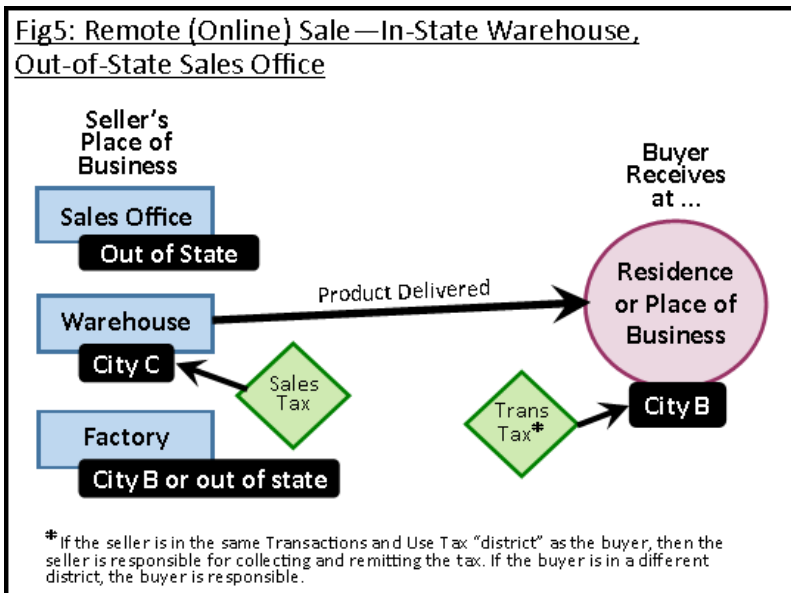
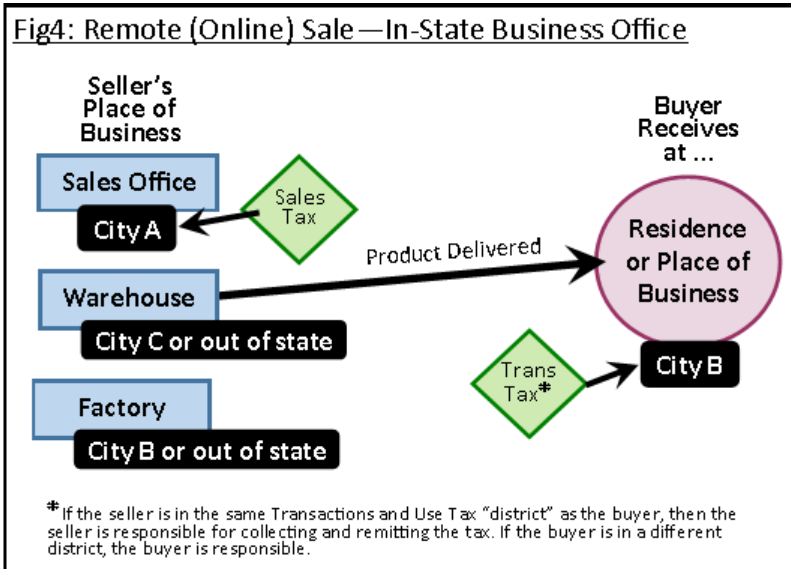
Support:

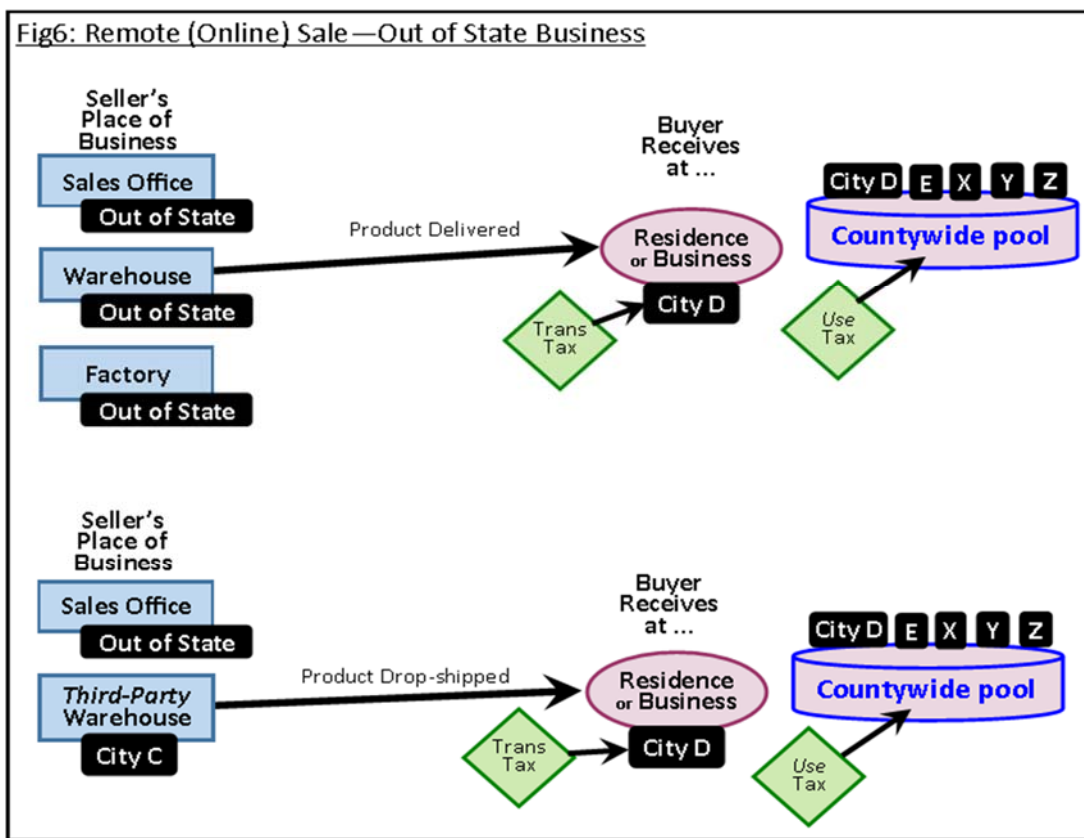
The following letters of concurrence were received:

Town of Apple Valley
City of El Cerrito
City of La Canada Flintridge
City of La Verne
City of Lakewood

City of Moorpark
City of Placentia
City of Sacramento







GUIDELINES FOR ALLOCATION OF LOCAL TAX - ONLINE AND IN-STORE			
Place of Sale	Location of Goods at the Time of Sale	How Customer Receives Goods	Allocation of Tax
Online – Order is placed or downloaded outside California	California Fulfillment Center	Shipped to California Customer	Local tax is allocated to the jurisdiction in which the fulfillment center is located
Online – Order is placed or downloaded in California	California Fulfillment Center	Shipped to California Customer	Per CDTFA Regulation 1802, local tax is allocated to the jurisdiction where the order is placed
Online	Out of State Fulfillment Center	Shipped to California Customer	Local tax is allocated to the countywide pool based on point of delivery
Online	Out of State Fulfillment Center	Picked Up In-Store (Click & Collect)	Local tax is allocated to the countywide pool based on point of delivery
Online	California Fulfillment Center Owned and Operated by Third Party Vendor	Drop-Shipped to California Customer	Local tax is allocated to the countywide pool based on point of delivery
Online	In-Store (Goods withdrawn from store inventory)	Shipped to California Customer	Local Tax is allocated to the jurisdiction where the store is located
Online	In-Store (Goods withdrawn from store inventory)	Picked Up In-Store (Click & Collect)	Local Tax is allocated to the jurisdiction where the store is located
In-Store	In-Store (Goods withdrawn from store inventory)	Over the Counter	Local Tax is allocated to the jurisdiction where the store is located

Courtesy of HdL Companies

Tax Incentive Programs, Sales Tax Sharing Agreements

In recent years, especially since Proposition 13 in 1978, local discretionary (general purpose revenues) have become more scarce. At the same time, options and procedures for increasing revenues have become more limited. One outcome of this in many areas has been a greater competition for sales and use tax revenues. This has brought a rise in arrangements to encourage certain land use development with rebates and incentives which exploit California's odd origin sales tax sourcing rules.

The typical arrangement is a sales tax sharing agreement in which a city provides tax rebates to a company that agrees to expand their operations in the jurisdiction of the city. Under such an arrangement, the company generally agrees to make a specified amount of capital investment and create a specific number of jobs over a period of years in exchange for specified tax breaks, often property tax abatement or some sort of tax credit. In some cases, this has simply taken the form of a sales office, while customers and warehouses and the related economic activity are disbursed elsewhere in the state. In some cases the development takes the form of warehouses, in which the sales inventory, owned by the company, is housed.⁶

Current sales tax incentive agreements in California rebate amounts ranging from 50% to 85% of sales tax revenues back to the corporations.

Today, experts familiar with the industry believe that between 20% to 30% of local Bradley-Burns sales taxes paid by California consumers is diverted from local general funds back to corporations; over \$1 billion per year.

The Source of Origin Based Sourcing Problems

Where other than over-the-counter sales are concerned origin sourcing often causes a concentration of large amounts of tax revenue in one location, despite the fact that the economic activity and service impacts are also occurring in other locations.

The large amounts of revenue concentrated in a few locations by California's "warehouse rule" origin sourcing causes a concentration of revenue far in excess of the service costs associated with the development.

In order to lure jobs and tax revenues to their communities, some cities have entered into rebate agreements with corporations. This has grown to such a problem, that 20% to 30% of total local taxes paid statewide are being rebated back to corporations rather than funding public services.

Moving to Destination Sourcing: The Concept⁷

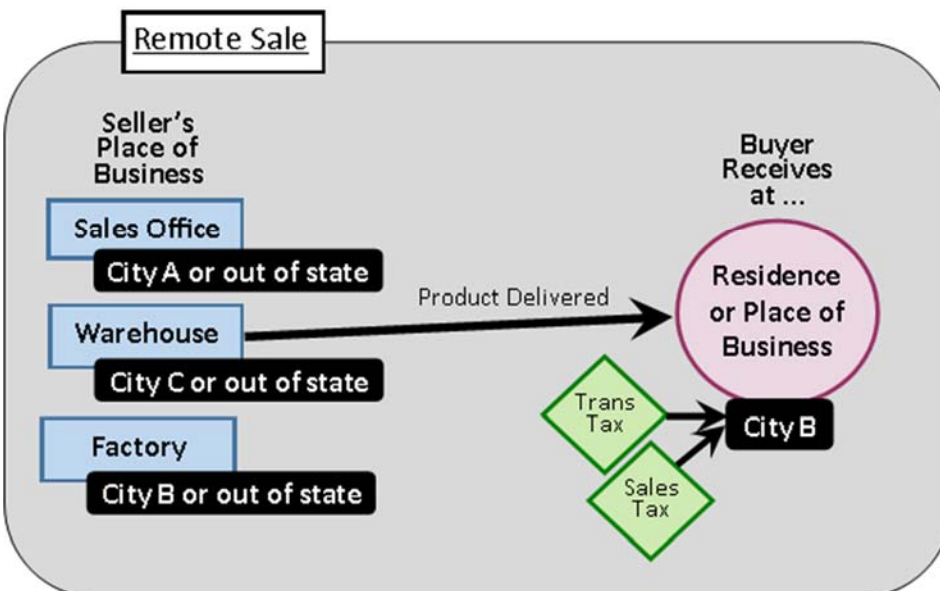
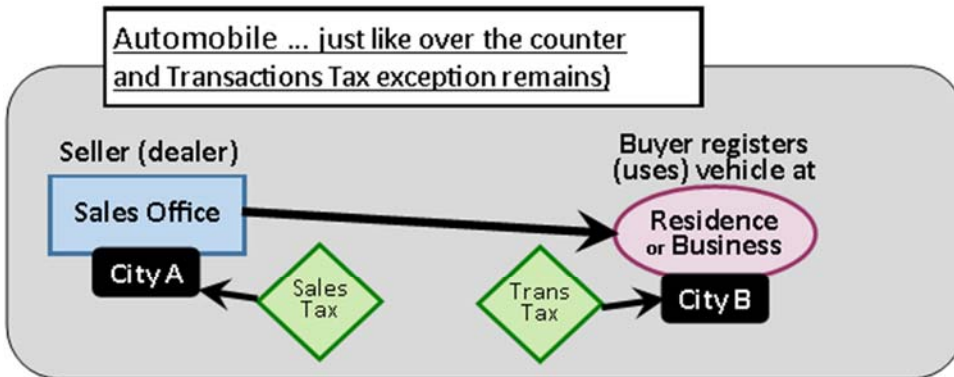
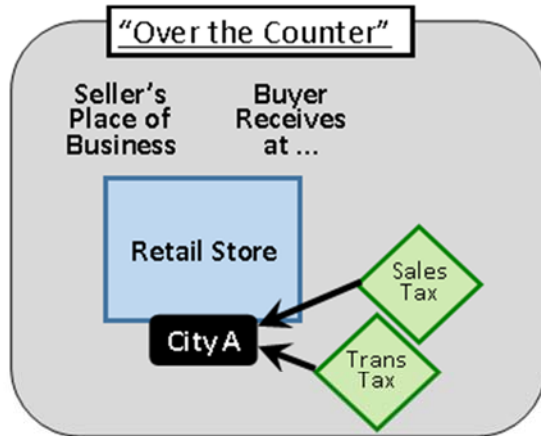
A change from origin sourcing rules to destination sourcing rules for the local tax component of California's sales tax would improve overall revenue collections and distribute these revenues more equitably among all of the areas involved in these transactions.

A change from origin based sourcing to destination based sourcing would have no effect on state tax collections. However, it would alter the allocations of local sales and use tax revenues among local agencies. Most retail transactions including dining, motor fuel purchases, and in-store purchases would not be affected. But in cases where the property is received by the purchaser in a different jurisdiction than where the sales agreement was negotiated, there would be a different allocation than under the current rules.

⁶ See Jennifer Carr, "Origin Sourcing and Tax Incentive Programs: An Unholy Alliance" Sales Tax Notes; May 27, 2013.

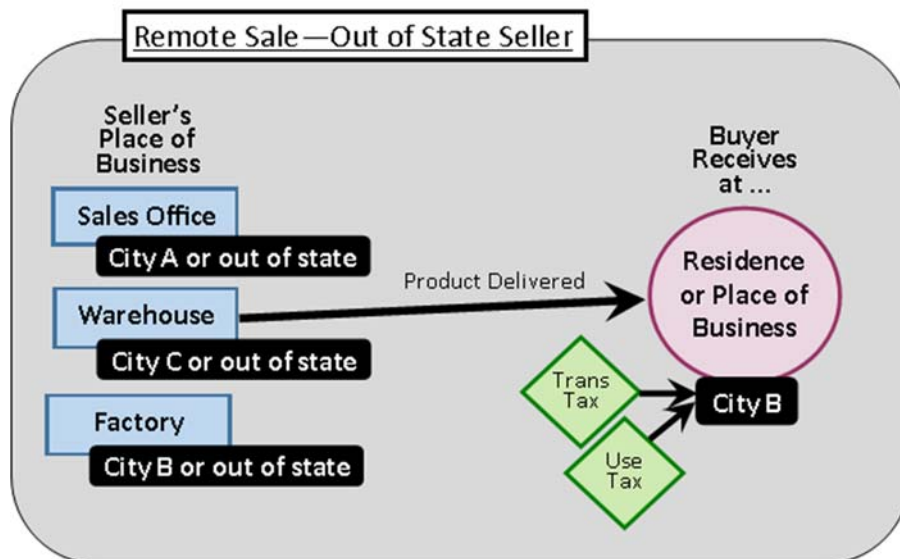
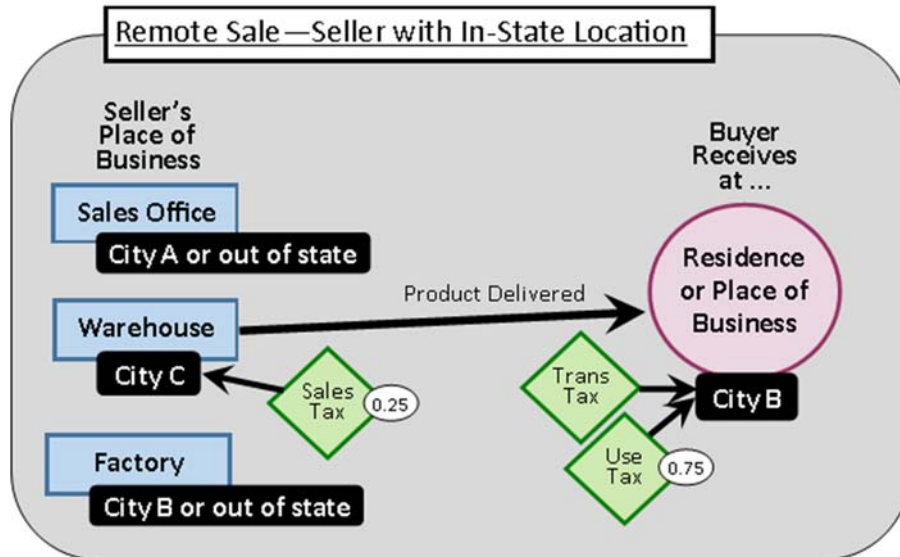
⁷ The same issues that are of concern regarding the local sales tax do not apply to California's Transactions and Use Taxes ("Add-on sales taxes") as these transactions, when not over the counter, are generally allocated to the location of use or, as in the case of vehicles, product registration. There is no need to alter the sourcing rules for transactions and use taxes.

Destination Sourcing Scenario 1: Full-On



Destination Sourcing Scenario 2: Split Source

- Same as now for “over the counter” and automobile.
- Leave 0.25% on current seller if instate (origin)
- Could be phased in.



mjgc

RESOLUTION OF THE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA CITIES (“CAL CITIES”)
CALLING ON THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT PROVIDES
FOR A FAIR AND EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BRADLEY BURNS 1% LOCAL
SALES TAX FROM IN-STATE ONLINE PURCHASES, BASED ON DATA WHERE
PRODUCTS ARE SHIPPED TO, AND THAT RIGHTFULLY TAKES INTO
CONSIDERATION THE IMPACTS THAT FULFILLMENT CENTERS HAVE ON HOST
CITIES BUT ALSO PROVIDES A FAIR SHARE TO CALIFORNIA CITIES THAT DO NOT
AND/OR CANNOT HAVE A FULFILLMENT CENTER WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION

WHEREAS, the 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Wayfair v. South Dakota* clarified that states could charge and collect tax on purchases even if the seller does not have a physical presence in the state; and

WHEREAS, California cities and counties collect 1% in Bradley Burns sales and use tax from the purchase of tangible personal property and rely on this revenue to provide critical public services such as police and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, in terms of “siting” the place of sale and determining which jurisdiction receives the 1% Bradley Burns local taxes for online sales, the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA) determines “out-of-state” online retailers as those with no presence in California that ship property from outside the state and are therefore subject to use tax, not sales tax, which is collected in a countywide pool of the jurisdiction where the property is shipped from; and

WHEREAS, for online retailers that have a presence in California and have a stock of goods in the state from which it fulfills orders, CDTFA considers the place of sale (“situs”) as the location from which the goods were shipped such as a fulfillment center; and

WHEREAS, in early 2021, one of the state’s largest online retailers shifted its ownership structure so that it is now considered both an in-state and out-of-state retailer, resulting in the sales tax this retailer generates from in-state sales now being **entirely** allocated to **the specific city cities** where **the** warehouse fulfillment centers **is-are** located as opposed to going into **a** countywide pools that **is are** shared with all jurisdictions in **those counties that County**, as was done previously; and

WHEREAS, this all-or-nothing **change for the** allocation of in-state sales tax has created winners and losers amongst cities as the online sales tax revenue **from the retailer** that was once spread amongst all cities in countywide pools is now concentrated in select cities that host **a** fulfillment centers; and

WHEREAS, this has created a tremendous inequity amongst cities, in particular for cities that are built out, do not have space for siting **a 1 million square foot** fulfillment centers, are not located along a major travel corridor, or otherwise not ideally suited to host a fulfillment center; and

WHEREAS, this inequity affects cities statewide, but in particular those with specific circumstances such as no/low property tax cities that are extremely reliant on sales tax revenue as well as cities struggling to meet their **Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)** obligations that are being compelled by the State to rezone precious commercial parcels to residential; and

WHEREAS, the inequity produced by allocating in-state online sales tax revenue exclusively to cities with fulfillment centers is exasperated even more by, in addition to already reducing the amount of revenue going into the countywide pools, the cities with fulfillment centers are also receiving a larger share of the dwindling countywide pool as it is allocated based on cities' proportional share of sales tax collected; and

WHEREAS, while it is important to acknowledge that those cities that have fulfillment centers experience impacts from these activities and deserve equitable supplementary compensation, it should also be recognized that the neighboring cities whose residents are ordering products from those that centers now receive no Bradley Burns revenue ~~from the center's sales activity~~ despite also experiencing the impacts created by them center, such as increased traffic and air pollution; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly accelerated the public's shift towards online purchases, a trend that is unlikely to be reversed to pre-pandemic levels; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Cal Cities calls on the State Legislature to pass legislation that provides for a fair and equitable distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% local sales tax from in-state online purchases, based on data where products are shipped to, and that rightfully takes into consideration the impacts that fulfillment centers have on host cities but also provides a fair share to California cities that do not and/or cannot have a fulfillment center within their jurisdiction.

LETTERS OF CONCURRENCE

Received after July 24 Deadline

Resolution No. 1



City of Downey

CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR
CLAUDIA M. FROMETA

MAYOR PRO TEM
BLANCA PACHECO

COUNCIL MEMBERS
SEAN ASHTON
CATHERINE ALVAREZ
MARIO TRUJILLO

CITY MANAGER
GILBERT A. LIVAS

CITY CLERK
ALICIA DUARTE, CMC

CITY ATTORNEY
YVETTE M. ABICH GARCIA

August 25, 2021

Cheryl Viegas Walker, President
League of California Cities
1400 K Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear President Walker:

The City of Downey strongly supports the City of Rancho Cucamonga's effort to submit a resolution for consideration by the General Assembly at the League's 2021 Annual Conference in Sacramento.

Current policies by the California Department of Tax and Fees (CDTFA) require that the 1 percent Bradley Burns's local tax revenue from in-state online retailers be allocated to the jurisdiction from which the package was shipped from, as opposed to going into a countywide pool as is the practice with out-of-state online retailers. Earlier this year, one of the largest online retailers shifted its ownership structure and now operates as an in-state online retailer as well as out-of-state online retailer. Whereas, all sales tax revenue generated by this retailer's sales previously went into a countywide pool and was distributed amongst the jurisdictions in the pool, now the revenue from in-state sales goes entirely to the city where the fulfillment center is located, and the packages shipped from. Cities that do not have a fulfillment center now receive no revenue from this retailer's online in-state sales transactions, even when the packages are delivered to locations within the cities' borders and paid for by residents in those locations. Cities that border jurisdictions with fulfillment centers also experience its impacts such as increased truck traffic, air pollution and declining road conditions.

This all-or-nothing practice has created clear winners and losers amongst cities as the online sales tax revenue from large online retailers that was once spread amongst all cities in countywide pools is now concentrated in select cities fortunate enough to host a fulfillment center. This has created a growing inequity amongst California cities, which only benefits some and is particularly unfair to cities that have no chance of ever obtaining a fulfillment center, such as those that are built out or are not situated along major travel corridors. No/low property tax cities that rely on sales tax revenue are especially impacted as well as cities struggling to meet their RHNA allocations that are being pressured by Sacramento to rezone commercial parcels to residential.

The current online sales tax distribution policies unfairly divide local agencies, exacerbate already difficult municipal finances, and in the end

Future Unlimited

result in a net loss of local government sales tax proceeds that simply serve to make private sector businesses even more profitable at the expense of everyone's residents

For these reasons, the City of Downey concurs that the resolution should go before the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Claudia M. Frometa

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudia M. Frometa', written in a cursive style.

Mayor

CC: James R. Bozajian, President, Los Angeles County Division c/o
Jennifer Quan, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Division,
jquan@cacities.org

Attachment A: Resolution



September 2, 2021

Ali Sajjad Taj, Committee Chair
General Resolutions Committee
League of California Cities (Cal Cities)
1400 K Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Taj:

The City of King City strongly supports the City of Rancho Cucamonga's resolution for consideration by the General Resolutions Committee at the League of California Cities' (Cal Cities) 2021 Annual Conference in Sacramento.

Current policies by the California Department of Tax and Fees (CDTFA) require that the 1 percent Bradley Burns local tax revenue from in-state online retailers be allocated to the jurisdiction from which the package was shipped from, as opposed to going into a countywide pool as is the practice with out-of-state online retailers. Earlier this year, one of the largest online retailers shifted its ownership structure and now operates as an in-state online retailer as well as out-of-state online retailer. Whereas all sales tax revenue generated by this retailer's sales previously went into a countywide pool and was distributed amongst the jurisdictions in the pool, now the revenue from in-state sales goes entirely to the city where the fulfillment center is located, and the packages shipped from. Cities that do not have a fulfillment center now receive no revenue from this retailer's online in-state sales transactions, even when the packages are delivered to locations within the cities' borders and paid for by residents in those locations. Cities that border jurisdictions with fulfillment centers also experience its impacts such as increased truck traffic, air pollution and declining road conditions.

This all-or-nothing practice has created clear winners and losers amongst cities as the online sales tax revenue from large online retailers that was once spread amongst all cities in countywide pools is now concentrated in select cities fortunate enough to host a fulfillment center. This has created a growing inequity amongst California cities, which only benefits some and is particularly unfair to cities who have no chance of ever obtaining a fulfillment center, such as those that are built out or are not situated along major travel corridors. No/low property tax cities that rely on sales tax revenue are especially impacted as well as cities struggling to meet their RHNA allocations that are being pressured by Sacramento to rezone precious commercial parcels to residential.

The current online sales tax distribution policies are inherently unfair and exasperate the divide between the winners and losers. Ultimately, the real winners may be the retailers, who leverage these policies to negotiate favorable sales tax sharing agreements from a small group of select cities understandably

wanting to host fulfillment centers. The current online sales tax distribution policies unfairly divide local agencies, exacerbate already difficult municipal finances, and in the end result in a net loss of local government sales tax proceeds that simply serve to make private sector businesses even more profitable at the expense of everyone's residents. We can do better than this. And we should all aspire to develop an equitable sales tax distribution of online sales that addresses the concerns noted above.

For these reasons, the City of King City urges the General Resolutions Committee to approve the resolution and allow it to go before the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Lebarre". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "M" and "L".

Mike Lebarre
Mayor
City of King



August 18, 2021

Cheryl Viegas Walker
President, League of California Cities
1400 K Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Letter of Support for the City of Rancho Cucamonga's Resolution for Fair and Equitable Distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% Local Sales Tax

Dear President Walker:

The City of Laguna Beach supports the City of Rancho Cucamonga's effort to submit a resolution for consideration by the General Assembly at the Cal Cities 2021 Annual Conference in Sacramento. Reform of California's antiquated sales tax distribution policies are long overdue and run counter to today's technology.

As you are aware, current California Department of Tax and Fees policies require that the 1% Bradley Burns local tax revenue from in-state online retailers be allocated to the jurisdiction from which the package was shipped from, as opposed to going into a countywide pool as is the practice with out-of-state online retailers. Taking advantage of this, one of the largest online retailers shifted its ownership structure, and now operates as an in-state online retailer as well as out-of-state online retailer. This all-or-nothing practice has created clear winners and losers amongst cities, as the online sales tax revenue from large online retailers that was once spread amongst all cities in countywide pools, is now concentrated in select cities fortunate enough to host a fulfillment center.

Not only does this practice create a growing inequity amongst California cities who do not have the ability to host a fulfillment center, it puts in place practices where large corporations receive the benefit over cities and our residents. Corporations are now more incentivized to craft sales tax sharing agreements with willing cities to rebate funds, which would otherwise flow into cities for needed public services. Since sales tax is a General Fund, it puts in place a system that irreparably harms needed public safety, recreation, social, and other services which benefit seniors, children, and lower-income families. The current online sales tax distribution policies are inherently unfair and exasperate the divide between the winners and losers. Even those few cities that gain from such an agreement cannot dispute that corporations are the clear winners under the current system and that our residents, who are generating the sales, lose out.

As Mayor of the City of Laguna Beach, I know we can do better, and we should all aspire to develop an equitable sales tax distribution of online sales tax that addresses the concerns noted

August 18, 2021

Page 2 of 2

above. Please allow the City of Rancho Cucamonga's Resolution for Fair and Equitable Distribution of the Bradley Burns 1% Local Sales Tax go before the General Assembly.

Sincerely,



Bob Whalen
Mayor



CITY OF OCEANSIDE

August 18, 2021

Ali Sajjad Taj, Committee Chair
General Resolutions Committee
League of California Cities (Cal Cities)
1400 K Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Taj:

On behalf of the City of Oceanside, I'm writing in support of the City of Rancho Cucamonga's resolution for consideration by the General Resolutions Committee at the League of California Cities' (Cal Cities) 2021 Annual Conference in Sacramento.

California Department of Tax and Fees (CDTFA) policies require that the 1 percent Bradley Burns local tax revenue from in-state online retailers be allocated to the jurisdiction from which the package was shipped from, as opposed to going into a countywide pool, as is the practice with out-of-state online retailers. Earlier this year, one of the largest online retailers shifted its ownership structure and now operates as an in-state online retailer as well as out-of-state online retailer. Whereas all sales tax revenue generated by this retailer's sales previously went into a countywide pool and was distributed amongst the jurisdictions in the pool, now the revenue from in-state sales goes entirely to the city where the fulfillment center is located, and the packages shipped from. Cities that do not have a fulfillment center now receive no revenue from this retailer's online in-state sales transactions, even when the packages are delivered to locations within the cities' borders and paid for by residents in those locations. Cities that border jurisdictions with fulfillment centers also experience its impacts, such as increased truck traffic, air pollution and declining road conditions due to their deliveries.

The current online sales tax distribution policies unfairly divide local agencies, exacerbate already difficult municipal finances, and in the end result in a net loss of local government sales tax proceeds that simply serve to make private sector businesses even more profitable at the expense of residents. We aspire to develop an equitable sales tax distribution of online sales that addresses the concerns noted above.

The City of Oceanside urges the General Resolutions Committee to approve the resolution and allow it to go before the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Esther C. Sanchez".

Esther C. Sanchez
MAYOR