

Act No. 54
Public Acts of 1996
Approved by the Governor
February 25, 1996
Filed with the Secretary of State
February 26, 1996

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
88TH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 1996**

Introduced by Rep. Bodem

ENROLLED HOUSE BILL No. 5305

AN ACT to amend sections 2d and 21 of Act No. 188 of the Public Acts of 1899, entitled as amended "An act to provide for the taxation of estates and generation-skipping transfers of property; to prescribe the powers and duties of certain personal representatives and state departments; to provide for the assessment and collection of the tax; and to provide for the administration and enforcement of this act," section 2d as amended by Act No. 65 of the Public Acts of 1992 and section 21 as amended by Act No. 54 of the Public Acts of 1993, being sections 205.202d and 205.221 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Section 1. Sections 2d and 21 of Act No. 188 of the Public Acts of 1899, section 2d as amended by Act No. 65 of the Public Acts of 1992 and section 21 as amended by Act No. 54 of the Public Acts of 1993, being sections 205.202d and 205.221 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, are amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2d. (1) The transfer of qualified farm real property to the qualified heir shall be exempt in the amount of 50% of the clear market value from all taxation under this act if the qualified heir executes a farmland development rights agreement pursuant to part 361 (farmland and open space preservation) of the natural resources and environmental protection act, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.36101 to 324.36117 of the Michigan Compiled Laws. The qualified heir who is party to an executed farmland development rights agreement may elect to defer the balance of the taxes due under this act on the transfer of qualified farm real property for a period of 10 years without penalty or interest. The executor, administrator, or trustee of the estate and the qualified heir may make the election provided by this subsection by filing an affidavit with the judge of probate, which shall be made in the time and manner and with the content prescribed by the judge of probate. The judge of probate shall consider all of the following:

(a) Whether both the executor, administrator, or trustee of the estate and the qualified heir have made the election provided by this subsection by filing an affidavit within the prescribed time and manner.

(b) Whether the proposed transfer is to a qualified heir as defined in section 21.

(c) Whether the proposed transfer is of qualified farm real property as defined in section 21.

(2) The judge of probate may request assistance from either the soil conservation district agency or the state land use agency in finding if the real property in question is farmland. If the judge of probate finds all of the factors described in subsection (1), the judge of probate shall issue an order which shall suspend for a period of 6 months the payment of any tax imposed by this act, authorize the transfer of the qualified farm real property to the qualified heir, and require the qualified heir of the qualified farm real property to apply for a farmland development rights agreement pursuant to part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994 within 30 days after the date of the order. The judge of probate shall notify the state land use agency in the department of natural resources of this order. If the qualified heir fails to apply

for a farmland development rights agreement, the tax imposed by this act shall be immediately due and there shall be added the maximum penalty and interest allowed in section 4 and any costs the judge of probate considers appropriate for this failure. The procedures, provisions and terms of a farmland development rights agreement shall be consistent with part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994. If the state land use agency either executes on behalf of the state a farmland development rights agreement or rejects an application for that agreement, it shall notify the judge of probate. Beginning 10 years after the effective date of the farmland development rights agreement, the 50% exemption for qualified farm real property provided by subsection (1) shall be a permanent exemption if the requirements of the farmland development rights agreement are satisfied under part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994. If the owner of record of real property subject to a farmland development rights agreement either sells the real property or ceases to use the real property for an agricultural use, the owner of record shall immediately notify the state land use agency and the commissioner of revenue of the sale or the nonagricultural use in form and content as prescribed by each.

(3) If real property subject to a farmland development rights agreement is sold by the owner of record within 5 years after the effective date of the agreement, the following amount shall be immediately due to the state by the seller:

(a) Taxes shall not be due if the successor in title is another qualified heir of the decedent and the successor in title complies with the provisions contained in the farmland development rights agreement. The exempt and deferred tax liability shall be transferred to the successor in title.

(b) The total amount of otherwise exempt and deferred taxes shall be due without penalty or interest if the successor in title is not a qualified heir of the decedent and the successor in title complies with the provisions contained in the farmland development rights agreement.

(c) The total amount of otherwise exempt and deferred taxes shall be due with interest at the rate of 3/4 of 1% per month compounded from the time the exemption was received until the taxes are paid if the request by the owner of record for relinquishment of the farmland development rights agreement is approved pursuant to section 36111(2)(b) of part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being section 324.36111 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(d) The total amount of otherwise exempt and deferred taxes shall be due without penalty or interest, in a case where the farmland development rights agreement is relinquished by the state pursuant to either section 36110(2) or 36111(2)(a) of part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.36110 and 324.36111 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(4) If real property subject to a farmland development rights agreement is sold by the owner of record not less than 6 but not more than 10 years after the effective date of the agreement, a proration of the remaining months multiplied by the following amount shall be immediately due to the state by the seller:

(a) Taxes shall not be due if the successor in title is another qualified heir of the decedent and the successor in title complies with the provisions contained in the farmland development rights agreement. The exempt and deferred tax liability shall be transferred to the successor in title.

(b) The total amount of otherwise exempt and deferred taxes shall be due without penalty or interest if the successor in title is not a qualified heir of the decedent and the successor in title complies with the provisions contained in the farmland development rights agreement.

(c) The total amount of otherwise exempt and deferred taxes shall be due with interest at the rate of 3/4 of 1% per month compounded added to this amount from the time this exemption was received until the taxes are paid if the request by the owner of record for relinquishment of the farmland development rights agreement is approved pursuant to section 36111(2)(b) of part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994.

(d) The total amount of otherwise exempt and deferred taxes shall be due without penalty or interest if the farmland development rights agreement is relinquished by the state pursuant to either section 36110(2) or 36111(2)(a) of part 361 of Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994.

(5) If the owner of record ceases to use real property subject to a farmland development rights agreement for an agricultural use, the total amount of otherwise and deferred taxes shall be due with interest at the rate of 3/4 of 1% per month compounded added to this amount from the time the exemption was received until the taxes are paid.

(6) Subsections (1) through (5) apply to a transfer of a decedent who dies before January 1, 1993. Subsection (7) applies to a transfer of a decedent who dies after December 31, 1992.

(7) For the estate of a decedent who dies after December 31, 1992, the transfer of qualified farm real and personal property or the transfer of the ownership of qualified farm real and personal property to a qualified heir is exempt from taxation under section 2.

Sec. 21. As used in this act:

(a) "Estate" or "property" means the property or interest in property of the testator, intestate, grantor, bargainor, or vendor, passing or transferred to those not specifically exempted from this act, and not as the property or interest

in property passing or transferred to the individual legatees, devisees, heirs, next of kin, grantees, donees, or vendees, and includes all property or interest in property whether situated within or without this state and including all property represented or evidenced by note, certificate, stock, land, contract, mortgage or other kind or character of evidence thereof, and regardless of whether that evidence of property is owned, kept or possessed within or without this state.

(b) "Transfer" includes the passing of property or an interest in property in possession or enjoyment, present or future, by inheritance, descent, devise, bequest, grant, deed, bargain, sale, or gift in the manner prescribed in this act.

(c) "County treasurer" or "prosecuting attorney" means the county treasurer or prosecuting attorney of the county having jurisdiction pursuant to section 10.

(d) "Qualified farm real and personal property" means real and personal property located in this state that on the date of the decedent's death was devoted primarily to an agricultural use, and, for a decedent who dies before January 1, 1993, meets all the following conditions or, for a decedent who dies after December 31, 1992, meets the conditions in either subparagraph (ii) or (iii):

(i) The real property is eligible as farmland pursuant to part 361 (farmland and open space preservation) of the natural resources and environmental protection act, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.36101 to 324.36117 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(ii) Fifty percent or more of the adjusted value of the estate consists of the adjusted value of real or personal property that on the date of the decedent's death, was devoted primarily to an agricultural use, and that was acquired from or transferred from the decedent to a qualified heir.

(iii) Twenty-five percent or more of the adjusted value of the estate consists of the adjusted value of real property that was acquired from or transferred from the decedent to a qualified heir and that meets the requirements of subparagraph (iv).

(iv) During the 8-year period ending on the date of the decedent's death, there have been periods aggregating 5 years or more during which the real property was owned by the decedent or a qualified heir in the operation of the farm and there was material participation by the decedent or a qualified heir in the operation of the farm.

(v) The real property is designated in the agreement referred to in section 2d.

(e) "Adjusted value" as used in subdivision (d) means:

(i) For the estate, the clear market value of the estate for purposes of this act, reduced by any proper deductions consisting of unpaid mortgages, debts, or liens on the property.

(ii) For real or personal property, the clear market value of that property for purposes of this act, reduced by any proper deductions consisting of unpaid mortgages, debts, or liens on the property.

(f) "Agricultural use" means property that is substantially devoted to the production of plants and animals useful to people, including forages and sod crops; grains and feed crops; dairy and dairy products; poultry; livestock, including breeding and grazing; fish; timber; fruits; vegetables; flowers; Christmas trees; plants or trees grown in an agricultural nursery; and other similar uses and activities.

(g) "Qualified heir" means an individual entitled to any beneficial interest in property who is the grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, husband, wife, child, legally adopted child, stepchild, brother, sister, wife or widow of a son, or husband or widower of a daughter of the decedent grantor, donor, or vendor, or for the use of a person to whom the decedent grantor, donor, or vendor stood in the mutually acknowledged relation of a parent, if the relationship began at or before the child's seventeenth birthday and continued until the death of the decedent grantor, donor, or vendor, or to or for the use of a lineal descendant of or a lineal descendant of a stepchild of the decedent grantor, donor, or vendor, or farm business partner, or to or for the use of any person to whom the decedent grantor, donor, or vendor stood in the mutually acknowledged relation of a farm business partner.

(h) "Soil conservation district agency" means the agency of the district where the real property is located created pursuant to part 93 (soil conservation districts) of the natural resources and environmental protection act, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being sections 324.9301 to 324.9313 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(i) "State land use agency" means the land use agency within the department of natural resources.

(j) "Material participation" shall be determined in the same manner as used in section 2032a of the internal revenue code and in any federal regulations relating to that section.

(k) "Family-owned" means participation by the decedent or a qualified heir in the operation of the business for not less than 500 hours in 5 out of the 8 years immediately preceding the decedent's death and either of the following:

(i) The business is 100% owned by the decedent and qualified heirs, or for a corporation, 100% of the stock is owned by the decedent and qualified heirs.

(ii) The business is 49% or more owned by the decedent, or for a corporation, 49% or more of the stock is owned by the decedent.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Clerk of the House of Representatives.

Secretary of the Senate.

Approved -----

Governor.