



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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## BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bills 47 and 48 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Tom Barrett  
Committee: Finance

**CONTENT**

Senate Bill 47 would amend the General Property Tax Act to specify that installing, replacing, or repairing an alternative energy system with a generating capacity of not more than 150 kilowatts would be considered normal maintenance if it were not a part of a structural addition or completion for the purposes of determining a property's taxable value.

Senate Bill 48 would amend the General Property Tax Act to do the following:

- Delete the certification and resolution process for alternative energy personal property tax exemptions.
- Apply the alternative energy personal property exemption to taxes levied on an alternative energy system after the bill's effective date, provided that it met certain conditions.

MCL 211.27 & 211.34d (S.B. 47)  
211.9i (S.B. 48)

Legislative Analyst: Drew Krogulecki

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The bills would reduce State and local property tax revenue, and increase School Aid Fund expenditures, by an unknown amount that would depend on the value of the affected property, local millage rates, and the number of parcels affected.

Under current legal interpretations, most solar energy/solar panels are already exempt from the State Education Tax and the 18 mills levied on nonhomestead property for local school operating purposes. As a result, for solar-related property, the bills would have no effect on State revenue or expense, although the bills would reduce local unit revenue. For alternative energy property other than solar-related property, the bills would reduce both State and local revenue, and increase School Aid Fund expenditures, if per pupil allowances were to be maintained.

The bills do present several technical issues, including some that affect the magnitude of any revenue loss. For example, Senate Bill 48 Section 2(B)(ii) would apply only to property installed after the bill's effective date. As a result, the bill would fully exempt affected property installed before the bill's effective date but would subject property installed after the bill's effective date to a limit of \$80,000 in true cash value. Additionally, unlike the limit imposed by Section 9o (to which the bill refers), the bill does not appear to define the relevant jurisdiction for the \$80,000 limit. As a result, it is unclear if the \$80,000 limit would apply on a taxing unit basis (as in section 9o), or if it would apply on a statewide basis, or taxpayer basis, or some other jurisdictional level. Furthermore, the bill would permit a taxpayer that was not claiming the exemption under 9o to claim an \$80,000 exemption for affected

property, even if the reason the taxpayer was not claiming the exemption was because the other personal property owned by the taxpayer exceeded \$80,000 in true cash value.

In Senate Bill 47, the bill would add "installing" alternative energy property as part of the definition of "normal maintenance", in addition to replacing or repairing such property. However, the section would permit normal maintenance to be exempted from consideration only if it were "not part of a structural addition". Assessors are likely to differ in their interpretations as to whether or not installing new alternative energy property constitutes a "part of a structural addition", especially when no alternative energy equipment or system has previously been affixed to the property.

Date Completed: 5-16-19

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