

Streamlined Sales Tax Project Meeting, May 25-26, 2000, Chicago, Illinois

56 representatives of 30 states involved in the Streamlined Sales Tax Project gathered in Chicago, Illinois, on May 25-26, 2000, to continue discussions toward the formation and implementation of a simplified and modernized sales tax system. The Project is an effort created by state governments that has as its primary goal simplification of the current sales tax system that will allow for efficient collection of the sales tax in the existing and new economies.

At the Chicago meeting, Project members heard from representatives of the retail industry and state legislators who implored the Project to forge ahead in its efforts to streamline the sales tax system. A representative of the National Retail Federation expressed the NRF's support of the Project's effort and also offered the NRF's expertise to the Project as it begins to formulate model legislation for implementation of the new system. State Sen. Steven Rauschenberger (R-IL) strongly urged the Project to move swiftly and purposely to avoid the consequences of federal intervention in state tax systems. The Project also heard testimony from representatives of the Committee on State Taxation and the American Automobile Leasing Association, who expressed their views with the Project's mission.

A panel discussion was also held at the meeting. Wayne Eggert (Lucent Technologies), David Bullington (Wal-Mart), and Chip McClure (Sears) provided Project members with their insights regarding the critical elements of a new simplified sales tax system. These comments focused primarily on simplification of tax rates and definitions—issues already being addressed by the Project Work Groups. Messrs. Eggert, Bullington, and McClure also met separately with the Tax Base and Tax Rate Work Groups to assist in working through several critical issues.

The Project also approved the formation and implementation of a pilot project. The purpose of the pilot is to test the capabilities of existing tax collection software under current law. The pilot will commence in October 2000 and will run for several months. Kansas, Michigan, North Carolina, and Wisconsin have confirmed their participation in the pilot. Other states may choose to join at a later date. A formal Request for Proposal will be written by North Carolina and issued by mid-June to software companies interested in testing tax collection software in the pilot. The Request for Proposal will be posted on the Project website.

Also, the Project will proceed with developing a database of individuals and companies that would like to volunteer their expertise to the Project. Both the Steering Committee and the Work Groups have found the expertise offered at previous meetings by technology companies and retailers to be a valuable asset in their efforts to address technical issues. The database information will be used to contact individuals who may be able to assist Work Groups at future meetings on specific issues or topics. An [application form](#) for individuals who wish to volunteer their time is available on the Project website.

The next meeting of the Project will be held on June 29-30, 2000 in Chicago, Illinois.