

# Statement of Estimated State Revenue Impact

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**Bill Number:** H.B. 3779

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**Committee Requesting Impact:** House Ways & Means Committee

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## Bill Summary

A bill to amend the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, by adding Chapter 44 to Title 11 so as to enact the "Bill Wylie Entrepreneurship Act of 2011" by providing for state nonrefundable income tax credits allocated by the Department of Commerce for qualified investments in businesses meeting certain criteria and primarily engaged in manufacturing, processing, warehousing, wholesaling, software development, information technology services, research and development or other nonprohibited services, to establish the criteria and procedures for the credit, and to make the credit transferable.

## REVENUE IMPACT <sup>11</sup>

This bill is expected to reduce General Fund individual income tax revenue by an estimated \$5,000,000 in FY2011-12 and each fiscal year thereafter.

## Explanation

This bill would add Chapter 44 to Title 11 to create the "South Carolina Angel Investment Act of 2011". Similar tax credit incentive programs have been implemented in 23 states, including North Carolina and Georgia. This bill would allow an angel investor to claim a nonrefundable state income tax credit of thirty-five percent of its qualified investment in a business start-up company. Total tax credits may not exceed \$5,000,000 for all taxpayers in any one taxable year, and total tax credits may not exceed \$100,000 for an individual taxpayer in a single taxable year. A taxpayer may apply fifty percent of the allowed tax credit to the investor net tax liability during the tax year the qualified investment is made, and the remaining fifty percent of the tax credit may be applied to any net taxable liability in future tax years. Any unused tax credits may be carried forward for ten years and tax credits may not be used against prior years' tax liability. Tax credits are transferrable by the heirs and legatees of the qualified investor upon death and/or to his spouse. The tax credit may be transferred only once and may be transferred to any taxpayer, but may be carried forward for ten years from the original date of issue.

An angel investor is an accredited investor who is a resident of this state or a nonresident who is obligated to pay taxes in this state, or is a pass-through entity which is formed for investment purposes, has no business operations, and does not have committed capital exceeding \$5,000,000. A pass-through entity means a partnership, an S-corporation, or a limited liability company taxed as a partnership. The individual investor or the pass-through business may invest in a qualified business that meets the following criteria – is either a corporation, limited liability company, or a general or limited partnership located in this state; was organized no more than five years before the qualified investment was made; is headquartered in this state; employs 25 or fewer people; has had gross annual revenue of \$2,000,000 or less in any complete fiscal year before registration with the Department of Commerce; and is primarily engaged in specific types of businesses such as manufacturing, processing, warehousing, wholesaling, software development, information technology services, and research and development.

Angel investors are different from venture capitalists. Angel investors generally invest their own money in business start-ups and very early stage companies, while venture capitalists mostly provide capital they have raised from others to later-stage businesses for growth. A venture capital fund or commodity

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fund with institutional investors or a hedge fund does not qualify as a "qualified investor". An angel investor is an individual who invests directly into promising entrepreneurial businesses in return for stock in the companies or a share of the profits. To be an accredited investor pursuant to the Securities Act of 1933 requires a net worth of \$1,000,000 or an annual income over \$200,000. Under the Securities Act of 1933, a company that offers or sells its securities must register the securities with the Securities and Exchange Commission or find an exemption from the registration requirements. The most widely used exemptions are rules 505 and 506 of Regulation D which allows a company to sell its securities to "accredited investors". An angel group is individual angel investors that join together with other angel investors to evaluate and invest in entrepreneurial ventures. They pool their capital to make larger investments. According to the Angel Capital Association, there are 165 member angel investor groups in the United States. There are two angel investor groups in South Carolina. They are the Charleston Angel Partners (CHAP) and the Upstate Carolina Angel Network (UCAN) in Greenville.

A qualified angel investor seeking to claim a tax credit must submit an application to the Department of Commerce to seek tentative approval of the tax credit. The Department would notify each qualified angel investor of the tax credits that are approved and allocated to the investor by January 31<sup>st</sup> for the year after the application was submitted. If the total amount of tax credits applied for exceeds the maximum amount of tax credits allowed, the tax credits must be allocated among the qualified investors on a pro rata basis.

According to the Angel Capital Association, a professional alliance of angel groups in North America, there were 7,000 accredited angel investors that financed business start-ups investing an average of nearly \$220,000 per project in 2009. After adjusting these figures to comparable state figures, we estimate that 105 investors in South Carolina would qualify as angel investors. Multiplying 105 accredited angel investors by an annual tax credit limitation of \$100,000 per individual investor for all projects yields an estimated \$10,500,000 that may be applied for by investors with the Department of Commerce in a tax year. Because fifty percent of the allowed tax credit may be used in the tax year the qualified investment is first made, an estimated total of \$5,250,000 of tax credits could be claimed in the first tax year of the program. We also expect that the maximum limitation of \$5,000,000 set aside for accredited angel investors would be met in future tax years. This bill is expected to reduce General Fund individual income tax revenue by an estimated \$5,000,000 in FY2011-12 and to reduce General Fund individual income tax revenue by an estimated \$5,000,000 in FY2012-13, and each fiscal year thereafter.

Lastly, each year, the Department of Commerce would report to the House Ways & Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee all of the businesses that have registered with the Department of Commerce as qualified businesses. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor, and the tax credits are first available for tax years after December 31, 2010.



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<sup>1/</sup> This statement meets the requirement of Section 2-7-71 for a state revenue impact by the BEA, or Section 2-7-76 for a local revenue impact of Section 6-1-85(B) for an estimate of the shift in local property tax incidence by the Office of Economic Research.