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## WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

**SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 1998** 

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# ENROLLED

# Com. Sub. for House Bill No. 4451

(By Delegate Warner)

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Passed March 12, 1998

In Effect Ninety Days from Passage

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OFFICE OF NEST MINGRAA SECRETARY OF STATE

## ENROLLED

#### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

FOR

## H. B. 4451

(BY DELEGATE WARNER)

[Passed March 12, 1998; in effect ninety days from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact sections four and sixteen, article three; section three, article seven; and sections one, three and five, article ten, all of chapter seventeen-a of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, all relating to motor vehicle registration; providing for a permanent, nontransferable license plate for commercial type trailers at a one time fee; eliminating certain classes of registration; circumstances under which vehicles are not to be registered; and suspension of registration.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That sections four and sixteen, article three; section three, article seven; and sections one, three and five, article ten, all of chapter seventeen-a of the code of West Virginia, one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 3. ORIGINAL AND RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION; ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF TITLE.

§17A-3-4. Application for certificate of title; tax for privilege of certification of title; penalty for false swearing.

1 (a) Certificates of registration of any vehicle or 2 registration plates therefor, whether original issues or 3 duplicates, may not be issued or furnished by the division 4 of motor vehicles or any other officer charged with the 5 duty, unless the applicant therefor already has received, or 6 at the same time makes application for and is granted, an 7 official certificate of title of the vehicle. The application shall be upon a blank form to be furnished by the division 8 9 of motor vehicles and shall contain a full description of 10 the vehicle, which description shall contain а 11 manufacturer's serial or identification number or other number as determined by the commissioner and any 12 13 distinguishing marks, together with a statement of the 14 applicant's title and of any liens or encumbrances upon 15 the vehicle, the names and addresses of the holders of the 16 liens and any other information as the division of motor 17 vehicles may require. The application shall be signed and 18 sworn to by the applicant.

19 (b) A tax is hereby imposed upon the privilege of 20 effecting the certification of title of each vehicle in the 21 amount equal to five percent of the value of the motor 22 vehicle at the time of the certification, to be assessed as 23 follows:

24 (1) If the vehicle is new, the actual purchase price or 25 consideration to the purchaser thereof is the value of the 26 vehicle. If the vehicle is a used or secondhand vehicle, the 27 present market value at time of transfer or purchase is the 28 value thereof for the purposes of this section: *Provided*, 29 That so much of the purchase price or consideration as is 30 represented by the exchange of other vehicles on which 31 the tax imposed by this section has been paid by the 32 purchaser shall be deducted from the total actual price or 33 consideration paid for the vehicle, whether the vehicle be 34 new or secondhand. If the vehicle is acquired through 35 gift, or by any manner whatsoever, unless specifically 36 exempted in this section, the present market value of the 37 vehicle at the time of the gift or transfer is the value 38 thereof for the purposes of this section.

39 (2) No certificate of title for any vehicle may be issued40 to any applicant unless the applicant has paid to the

41 division of motor vehicles the tax imposed by this section 42 which is five percent of the true and actual value of the 43 vehicle whether the vehicle is acquired through purchase, 44 by gift or by any other manner whatsoever except gifts 45 between husband and wife or between parents and 46 children: *Provided*. That the husband or wife, or the 47 parents or children previously have paid the tax on the 48 vehicles transferred to the state of West Virginia.

49 (3) The division of motor vehicles may issue a 50 certificate of registration and title to an applicant if the 51 applicant provides sufficient proof to the division of 52 motor vehicles that the applicant has paid the taxes and 53 fees required by this section to a motor vehicle dealership 54 that has gone out of business or has filed bankruptcy 55 proceedings in the United States bankruptcy court and the 56 taxes and fees so required to be paid by the applicant have 57 not been sent to the division by the motor vehicle 58 dealership or have been impounded due to the bankruptcy 59 proceedings: *Provided*, That the applicant makes an 60 affidavit of the same and assigns all rights to claims for 61 money the applicant may have against the motor vehicle 62 dealership to the division of motor vehicles.

63 (4) The division of motor vehicles shall issue a 64 certificate of registration and title to an applicant without 65 payment of the tax imposed by this section if the applicant 66 is a corporation, partnership or limited liability company 67 transferring the vehicle to another corporation, partnership 68 or limited liability company when the entities involved in 69 the transfer are members of the same controlled group 70 and the transferring entity has previously paid the tax on 71 the vehicle transferred. For the purposes of this section, 72 control means ownership, directly or indirectly, of stock or 73 equity interests possessing fifty percent or more of the 74 total combined voting power of all classes of the stock of a 75 corporation or equity interests of a partnership or limited 76 liability company entitled to vote or ownership, directly or 77 indirectly, of stock or equity interests possessing fifty 78 percent or more of the value of the corporation, 79 partnership or limited liability company.

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(5) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to

81 vehicles to be registered as Class H vehicles or Class M 82 vehicles, as defined in section one, article ten of this 83 chapter, which are used or to be used in interstate 84 commerce. Nor does the tax imposed by this section 85 apply to the titling of Class B vehicles registered at a gross 86 weight of fifty-five thousand pounds or more, or to the 87 titling of Class C semitrailers, full trailers, pole trailers and 88 converter gear: *Provided*, That if an owner of a vehicle 89 has previously titled the vehicle at a declared gross weight 90 of fifty-five thousand pounds or more and the title was 91 issued without the payment of the tax imposed by this 92 section, then before the owner may obtain registration for 93 the vehicle at a gross weight less than fifty-five thousand 94 pounds, the owner shall surrender to the commissioner the 95 exempted registration, the exempted certificate of title, and 96 pay the tax imposed by this section based upon the 97 current market value of the vehicle: *Provided*, however, 98 That notwithstanding the provisions of section nine, article 99 fifteen, chapter eleven of this code, the exemption from 100 tax under this section for Class B vehicles in excess of 101 fifty-five thousand pounds and Class C semitrailers, full 102 trailers, pole trailers and converter gear may not subject 103 the sale or purchase of the vehicles to the consumers sales 104 tax.

105 (6) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to 106 titling of vehicles leased by residents of West Virginia. A 107 tax is hereby imposed upon the monthly payments for the 108 lease of any motor vehicle leased by a resident of West 109 Virginia, which tax is equal to five percent of the amount 110 of the monthly payment, applied to each payment, and 111 continuing for the entire term of the initial lease period. 112 The tax shall be remitted to the division of motor vehicles 113 on a monthly basis by the lessor of the vehicle.

114 (7) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to titling of vehicles by a registered dealer of this state for 115 116 resale only, nor does the tax imposed by this section apply 117 to titling of vehicles by this state or any political 118 subdivision thereof, or by any volunteer fire department 119 or duly chartered rescue or ambulance squad organized 120 and incorporated under the laws of the state of West 121 Virginia as a nonprofit corporation for protection of life

122 or property. The total amount of revenue collected by 123 reason of this tax shall be paid into the state road fund and 124 expended by the commissioner of highways for matching 125 federal funds allocated for West Virginia. In addition to 126 the tax, there is a charge of five dollars for each original 127 certificate of title or duplicate certificate of title so issued: 128 Provided, That this state or any political subdivision 129 thereof, or any volunteer fire department, or duly 130 chartered rescue squad is exempt from payment of the 131 charge.

(8) The certificate is good for the life of the vehicle, so
long as the vehicle is owned or held by the original holder
of the certificate, and need not be renewed annually, or
any other time, except as provided in this section.

(9) If, by will or direct inheritance, a person becomes
the owner of a motor vehicle and the tax imposed by this
section previously has been paid, to the division of motor
vehicles, on that vehicle, he or she is not required to pay
the tax.

141 (10) A person who has paid the tax imposed by this 142 section may not be required to pay the tax a second time 143 for the same motor vehicle, but is required to pay a charge 144 of five dollars for the certificate of retitle of that motor 145 vehicle, except that the tax shall be paid by the person 146 when the title to the vehicle has been transferred either in 147 this or another state from the person to another person 148 and transferred back to the person.

149 (c) Notwithstanding any provisions of this code to the 150 contrary, the owners of trailers, semitrailers, recreational 151 vehicles and other vehicles not subject to the certificate of 152 title tax prior to the enactment of this chapter are subject 153 to the privilege tax imposed by this section: *Provided*, 154 That the certification of title of any recreational vehicle 155 owned by the applicant on the thirtieth day of June, one 156 thousand nine hundred eighty-nine, is not subject to the 157 tax imposed by this section: Provided, however, That 158 mobile homes, manufactured homes, modular homes and 159 similar nonmotive propelled vehicles, except recreational 160 vehicles and house trailers, susceptible of being moved 161 upon the highways but primarily designed for habitation

and occupancy, rather than for transporting persons or 162 163 property, or any vehicle operated on a nonprofit basis and 164 used exclusively for the transportation of mentally 165 retarded or physically handicapped children when the application for certificate of registration for the vehicle is 166 167 accompanied by an affidavit stating that the vehicle will be 168 operated on a nonprofit basis and used exclusively for the 169 transportation of mentally retarded and physically 170 handicapped children, are not subject to the tax imposed 171 by this section, but are taxable under the provisions of 172 articles fifteen and fifteen-a, chapter eleven of this code.

173 (d) Any person making any affidavit required under 174 any provision of this section, who knowingly swears 175 falsely, or any person who counsels, advises, aids or abets 176 another in the commission of false swearing is on the first 177 offense guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction 178 thereof, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars 179 or be imprisoned in the county or regional jail for a 180 period not to exceed six months or, in the discretion of the 181 court, both fined and imprisoned. For a second or any 182 subsequent conviction within five years, that person is 183 guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be 184 fined not more than five thousand dollars or be 185 imprisoned in the penitentiary for not less than one year 186 nor more than five years or, in the discretion of the court, 187 fined and imprisoned.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this
section, any person in the military stationed outside West
Virginia, or his or her dependents who possess a motor
vehicle with valid registration, are exempt from the
provisions of this article for a period of nine months from
the date that that person returns to this state or the date his
or her dependent returns to this state, whichever is later.

(f) After the first day of July, one thousand nine
hundred ninety-seven, no person may transfer, purchase
or sell a factory-built home without a certificate of title
issued by the commissioner in accordance with the
provisions of this article:

200 (1) Any person who fails to provide a certificate of 201 title upon the transfer, purchase or sale of a factory-built 202 home is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction 203 thereof, shall for the first offense be fined not less than 204 one hundred dollars nor more than one thousand dollars, 205 or be imprisoned in the county or regional jail for not 206 more than one year or, both fined and imprisoned. For 207 each subsequent offense, the fine may be increased to not 208 more than two thousand dollars, with imprisonment in the 209 county or regional jail not more than one year or, both 210 fined and imprisoned.

(2) Failure of the seller to transfer a certificate of title
upon sale or transfer of the factory-built home gives rise
to a cause of action, upon prosecution thereof, and allows
for the recovery of damages, costs and reasonable attorney
fees.

#### §17A-3-16. Expiration of registration and certificates of title.

1 (a) Every vehicle registration under this chapter and 2 every registration card and registration plate issued under 3 this chapter expires at midnight on the last day of the 4 month designated by the commissioner: *Provided*, That 5 the commissioner may extend the period during which the 6 registration plates may be used.

7 Certificates of title need not be renewed annually but 8 remain valid until canceled by the division for cause or 9 upon a transfer of any interest shown in the vehicle.

10 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section or of 11 any provision of this chapter, the commissioner shall 12 adopt a staggered registration system whereby the 13 registration of Class A motor vehicles is for a period of 14 twelve consecutive calendar months, the expiration dates 15 of the registrations to be staggered throughout the year: 16 Provided, That on or after the first day of July, one 17 thousand nine hundred ninety-seven, the commissioner 18 shall also offer an optional two-year registration system, 19 whereby the registration of all vehicles shall be for a 20 period of twenty-four consecutive calendar months, the 21 expiration dates of the registrations to be staggered 22 throughout the year. Under this option, all annual fees 23 due at the time of registration shall be multiplied by two.

24 (1) On or after the first day of July, one thousand nine 25 hundred ninety-seven, all Class A motor vehicles as 26 defined in section one, article ten of this chapter, shall be 27 registered for a period of twelve or twenty-four 28 consecutive calendar months. There hereby are 29 established twelve registration periods, each of which shall 30 start on the first day of each calendar month of the year 31 and shall end on the last day of the twelfth month from date of beginning. The period ending on the thirty-first 32 33 day of January is designated the first period; that ending 34 on the twenty-eighth (twenty-ninth) day of February is designated the second; that ending on the thirty-first day 35 36 of March is designated the third; that ending on the 37 thirtieth day of April is designated the fourth; that ending 38 on the thirty-first day of May is designated the fifth; that 39 ending on the thirtieth day of June is designated the sixth; 40 that ending on the thirty-first day of July is designated the 41 seventh; that ending on the thirty-first day of August is 42 designated the eighth; that ending on the thirtieth day of 43 September is designated the ninth; that ending on the 44 thirty-first day of October is designated the tenth; that 45 ending on the thirtieth day of November is designated the 46 eleventh; and that ending on the thirty-first day of 47 December is designated the twelfth.

48 (2) All Class A motor vehicles, which are operated for 49 the first time upon the public highways of this state to and 50 including the fifteenth day of any given month are subject 51 to registration and payment of the fee for the twelve or 52 twenty-four-month period commencing the first day of 53 the month of operation. All Class A motor vehicles 54 operated for the first time upon the public highways of 55 this state on and after the sixteenth day of any given 56 month are subject to registration and payment of fee for 57 the twelve or twenty-four-month period commencing the 58 first day of the month of the next following calendar 59 month.

(c) On or before the first day of July, one thousand
nine hundred ninety-six, all Class T and Class R vehicles
shall be registered for a maximum period of three years or
portion thereof based on the number of years remaining
in the three-year period designated by the commissioner.

(d) On or before the first day of July, two thousand, all
Class C trailers shall be registered for the duration of the
owner's interest in the trailer and shall not expire until
either sold or otherwise permanently removed from the
service of the owner.

#### ARTICLE 7. SPECIAL STICKERS.

#### §17A-7-3. Operation of house trailer under special stickers; application and fees; expiration; issuance of special stickers to holders of Class B registration plates.

1 Upon application therefor on a form prescribed by 2 him or her the commissioner may issue to the owner of a 3 house trailer a special one-movement sticker of such 4 design and content, as may be prescribed by him or her: 5 *Provided*, That such special sticker shall not be issued to 6 any house trailer or trailer dealer. Such sticker shall be 7 valid for the movement of a house trailer one time only 8 over the streets and highways of this state, and no more 9 than one such sticker may be issued for the same house 10 trailer while owned by the same person. A fee of two 11 dollars shall be received by the department for each 12 special sticker. In order that any holder of a Class B 13 registration plate who is engaged in the business of 14 moving house trailers for hire may move a house trailer at 15 the request of the owner thereof without the delay which 16 would be incident to such owner obtaining a special one-17 movement sticker, any such holder may from time to time 18 apply to the commissioner for a supply of said special 19 one-movement stickers, and upon proper application 20 therefor on a form prescribed by the commissioner and 21 payment of the fee for each such sticker hereinbefore in 22 this section prescribed, the commissioner shall issue to 23 such holder a supply of serially numbered stickers, not in 24 excess of twenty-five upon any one application. Before 25 moving any such house trailer, the holder of the Class B registration plate who has obtained a supply of such 26 27 special one-movement stickers shall issue such a sticker to 28 the owner thereof and shall make certain that such sticker 29 is affixed to the house trailer prior to the movement 30 thereof. No refund or credit of fees paid by the holder of

any such Class B registration plate for any such specialone-movement sticker shall be made or allowed.

ARTICLE 10. FEES FOR REGISTRATION, LICENSING, ETC.

# §17A-10-1. Classification of vehicles for purpose of registration.

1 Vehicles subject to registration under the provisions of 2 this chapter shall be placed in the following classes for the 3 purpose of registration:

4 Class A. Motor vehicles of passenger type and trucks 5 with a gross weight of not more than eight thousand 6 pounds;

7 Class B. Motor vehicles designated as trucks with a
8 gross weight of more than eight thousand pounds, truck
9 tractors or road tractors;

Class C. All trailers and semitrailers, except house
trailers and trailers or semitrailers designed to be drawn by
Class A motor vehicles and having a gross weight of less
than two thousand pounds;

14 Class G. Motorcycles and parking enforcement 15 vehicles;

16 Class H. Motor vehicles operated regularly for the 17 transportation of persons for compensation under a 18 certificate of convenience and necessity or contract carrier 19 permit issued by the public service commission;

20 Class J. Motor vehicles operated for transportation of 21 persons for compensation by common carriers, not 22 running over a regular route or between fixed termini;

Class M. Mobile equipment as defined in subdivision
(oo), section one, article one of this chapter;

25 Class R. House trailers;

Class T. Trailers or semitrailers of a type designed to
be drawn by Class A vehicles and having a gross weight of
less than two thousand pounds; and

29 Class Farm Truck. Motor vehicles designated as

30 trucks having a minimum gross weight of more than eight thousand pounds and a maximum gross weight of sixty-31 32 four thousand pounds, used exclusively in the conduct of a farming business, engaged in the production of 33 agricultural products by means of: (a) The planting, 34 35 cultivation and harvesting of agricultural, horticultural, vegetable or other products of the soil; or (b) the raising. 36 feeding and care of livestock, poultry, bees and dairy 37 38 Such farm truck shall be used only for the cattle. 39 transportation of agricultural products so produced by the 40 owner thereof, or for the transportation of agricultural 41 supplies used in such production, or for private passenger 42 use.

# §17A-10-3. Registration fees for vehicles equipped with pneumatic tires.

1 The following registration fees for the classes 2 indicated shall be paid to the division for the registration 3 of vehicles subject to registration under this chapter when 4 equipped with pneumatic tires:

5 (a) Registration fees for the following classes shall be 6 paid to the division annually:

7 (1) Class A. — The registration fee for all motor 8 vehicles of this class is twenty-eight dollars and fifty cents: 9 *Provided*, That the registration fees and any other fees 10 required by this chapter for Class A vehicles under the 11 optional biennial staggered registration system shall be 12 multiplied by two and paid biennially to the division.

No license fee shall be charged for vehicles owned by
churches, or by trustees for churches, which are regularly
used for transporting parishioners to and from church
services. Notwithstanding the exemption, the certificate of
registration and license plates shall be obtained the same
as other cards and plates under this article.

19 (2) Class B.— The registration fee for all motor 20 vehicles of this class is as follows:

(A) For declared gross weights of eight thousand one
pounds to sixteen thousand pounds — twenty-eight
dollars plus five dollars for each one thousand pounds or

24 fraction thereof that the gross weight of the vehicle or 25 combination of vehicles exceeds eight thousand pounds.

(B) For declared gross weights greater than sixteen
thousand pounds, but less than fifty-five thousand pounds
- seventy-eight dollars and fifty cents plus ten dollars for
each one thousand pounds or fraction thereof that the
gross weight of the vehicle or combination of vehicles
exceeds sixteen thousand pounds.

32 (C) For declared gross weights of fifty-five thousand 33 pounds or more — seven hundred thirty-seven dollars and 34 fifty cents plus fifteen dollars and seventy-five cents for 35 each one thousand pounds or fraction thereof that the 36 gross weight of the vehicle or combination of vehicles 37 exceeds fifty-five thousand pounds.

38 (3) Class G. — The registration fee for each 39 motorcycle or parking enforcement vehicle is eight 40 dollars.

41 (4) Class H. — The registration fee for all vehicles for 42 this class operating entirely within the state is five dollars; 43 and for vehicles engaged in interstate transportation of 44 persons, the registration fee is the amount of the fees 45 provided by this section for Class B, reduced by the 46 amount that the mileage of the vehicles operated in states 47 other than West Virginia bears to the total mileage 48 operated by the vehicles in all states under a formula to be 49 established by the division of motor vehicles.

50 (5) Class J. — The registration fee for all motor 51 vehicles of this class is eighty-five dollars. Ambulances 52 and hearses used exclusively as such are exempt from the 53 special fees set forth in this section.

54 (6) Class M. — The registration fee for all vehicles of 55 this class is seventeen dollars and fifty cents.

56 (7) *Class Farm Truck.* — The registration fee for all 57 motor vehicles of this class is as follows:

58 (A) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of eight
59 thousand one pounds to sixteen thousand pounds — thirty
60 dollars.

61 (B) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of 62 sixteen thousand one pounds to twenty-two thousand 63 pounds — sixty dollars.

64 (C) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of 65 twenty-two thousand one pounds to twenty-eight thousand 66 pounds — ninety dollars.

67 (D) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of 68 twenty-eight thousand one pounds to thirty-four thousand 69 pounds — one hundred fifteen dollars.

(E) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of
thirty-four thousand one pounds to forty-four thousand
pounds — one hundred sixty dollars.

(F) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of
forty-four thousand one pounds to fifty-four thousand
pounds — two hundred five dollars.

76 (G) For farm trucks of declared gross weights of
77 fifty-four thousand one pounds to sixty-four thousand
78 pounds — two hundred fifty dollars.

(b) Registration fees for the following classes shall be
paid to the division for a maximum period of three years,
or portion thereof based on the number of years
remaining in the three-year period designated by the
commissioner:

84 (1) Class R. — The annual registration fee for all 85 vehicles of this class is twelve dollars.

86 (2) Class T. — The annual registration fee for all
87 vehicles of this class is eight dollars.

(c) The fees paid to the division for a multi-year
registration provided for by this chapter shall be the same
as the annual registration fee established by this section
and any other fee required by this chapter multiplied by
the number of years for which the registration is issued.

93 (d) The registration fee for all Class C vehicles shall be
94 fifty dollars. On or before the first day of July, two95 thousand, all Class C trailers shall be registered for the
96 duration of the owner's interest in the trailer and shall not

- 97 expire until either sold or otherwise permanently removed
- 98 from the service of the owner.

#### §17A-10-5. Public service commission assessment must be paid before vehicle registered; suspension of registration cards and plates issued to motor carriers; privilege to exchange suspended registration cards and plates.

1 The commissioner shall not register any vehicle 2 subject to economic regulation by the public service 3 commission unless the assessment for such vehicle 4 provided for in section six, article six, chapter twenty-four-5 a of this code shall have been paid and notice of such 6 payment shall have been received by the commissioner in 7 the manner provided by said section.

8 The commissioner shall suspend any registration card 9 and registration plate issued by the department under 10 authority of this section for any vehicle subject to economic regulation by the public service commission, 11 12 pursuant to chapter twenty-four-a of this code, upon 13 receiving certification in writing from the public service 14 commission that said commission has canceled, suspended 15 or revoked the certificate of convenience and necessity, 16 permit or other operating authority of the motor carrier to 17 whom or to which such registration card and registration plate were issued under the authority provided by the first 18 19 paragraph of this section: Provided, That the motor 20 carrier to whom or to which said registration card and 21 registration plate were issued shall have the privilege of 22 receiving in exchange for any such suspended registration 23 card and registration plate a registration card and 24 registration plate for a vehicle of a different class as 25 provided by section one of article four of this chapter.

15 [Enr. Com. Sub. for H. B. 4451

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originating in the House.

Takes effect ninety days from passage. Clerk of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Delegates

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