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PRESS RELEASE

Government of Belize Announces First-Ever GST Christmas Waiver

Belmopan, December 5, 2024.

The Government of Belize announces that, for the first time, **General Sales Tax (GST) will be waived on local retail sales of ALL standard-rated goods on December 14, 15, 21, and 22, 2024**, subject to certain exceptions. On these days, Belizeans can purchase goods in shops and stores across the country without having to pay the 12.5% tax usually applied to most purchases.

In addition, for the entire month of December, picnic shoulder hams, smoked ham legs, and imported turkeys will be zero-rated.

The Christmas Waiver applies to immediate local retail purchases only, and not for items ordered, bought on credit, layaway or hire purchase or bought on a wholesale basis or on consignment. Additionally, importers will still need to pay GST to Customs for imported goods. Purchases of motor vehicles, gasoline, LPG, diesel, firearms, ammunition, cigarettes, and alcoholic beverages will not be eligible for the waiver. GST will also continue to apply to the taxable supply of services.

GST Registrants utilizing a POS system or programmable cash register will not have to re-program their systems as the zero-rate can be applied using a discount of 12.5% on the goods purchased. The GST Registrants who utilize cash registers that add GST to the sale will simply not add GST on sales on the specified dates. Shoppers are advised to check their receipts at the time of purchase to ensure GST is not incorrectly applied and to report any abuse to the Belize Tax Services Department.

When filing GST returns for December 2024, registrants are required to report zero-rated sales on line 110 and provide detailed sales data for the GST-free days. Input tax recovery for eligible goods remains unaffected.

This initiative underscores the Government's commitment to provide impactful relief to combat global inflation which has adversely affected the cost of living while supporting our local businesses and economy.

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