1 2 3	STATE OF NEW MEXICO ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS OFFICE TAX ADMINISTRATION ACT
4 5 6 7 8	IN THE MATTER OF THE PROTEST OF EMMETT D MCINTYRE HIGH ROLLS HOME FURNISHINGS TO ASSESSMENT ISSUED UNDER LETTER ID NO. L0221491888
9	v. Case Number 20.08-104A, D&O 22-13
10	NEW MEXICO TAXATION AND REVENUE DEPARTMENT
11	DECISION AND ORDER
12	On December 13, 2021, Hearing Officer Chris Romero, Esq., conducted a telephonic
13	hearing on the merits in the matter of the protest of High Rolls Home Furnishings ("Taxpayer").
14	Ms. Paula S. Gutierrez, CPA appeared representing Taxpayer accompanied by Mr. Emmett D.
15	McIntyre. Staff Attorney, Mr. Peter Breen, appeared on behalf of the Taxation and Revenue
16	Department ("Department") accompanied by Ms. Angelica Rodriguez, protest auditor. All
17	hearing participants agreed to appear by telephone.
18	Department Exhibits $A-D$ and Ms . Rodriguez' pre-filed testimony and Taxpayer Exhibits
19	1-5 and Mr. McIntyre's pre-filed testimony were admitted as evidentiary exhibits and
20	Administrative Notice was taken of the Administrative File.
21	The primary issue in dispute is factual and concentrates on the location where Taxpayer sold
22	tangible personal property. Because out-of-state sales of tangible personal property are not taxable
23	as gross receipts under NMSA 1978, Section 7-9-3.5 (2007, Amended 2019), determination of that
24	fact is dispositive. In this case, the Hearing Officer was persuaded by Taxpayer's credible testimony
25	that all sales of tangible personal property occurred outside of New Mexico. Therefore, Taxpayer
26	established entitlement to a full abatement of the assessment underlying the protest. IT IS
27	DECIDED AND ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:
	In the Matter of the Protest of Emmett D. McIntyre - High Rolls Home Furnishings

1	FINDINGS OF FACT
2	<u>Background</u>
3	1. High Rolls Home Furnishings did not exist during the periods relevant to
4	the protest. Between 2013 and 2016, Mr. McIntyre engaged in business as a sole
5	proprietor. [Direct Examination of Mr. McIntyre; Cross Examination of Mr. McIntyre]
6	2. From 2013 to 2016, Mr. McIntyre built furniture, specifically rocking
7	chairs, which he then sold exclusively outside of New Mexico, in Texas. [Direct
8	Examination of Ms. Gutierrez; Direct Examination of Mr. McIntyre]
9	3. Mr. McIntyre constructed the furniture at his residence and shop in High
10	Rolls, New Mexico. [Direct Examination of Mr. McIntyre]
11	4. When construction was completed and the rocking chairs were ready for
12	market, Mr. McIntyre loaded his rocking chairs onto a trailer and personally drove them
13	to Texas where he would sell them. [Direct Examination of Mr. McIntyre; Cross
14	Examination of Mr. McIntyre]
15	5. Destinations in Texas included Wichita Falls, San Antonio, and El Paso.
16	[Taxpayer Ex. 4.1 – 4.3; Direct Examination of Mr. McIntyre; Direct Examination of Ms.
17	Gutierrez]
18	6. High Rolls, New Mexico is located in Otero County. It is approximately
19	101 highway miles northeast of El Paso, Texas. [Pre-Filed Testimony of Mr. McIntyre
20	(Pages 2 – 3, Response to Para. 3); Administrative Notice ¹]
21	7. In addition to traveling to El Paso, Mr. McIntyre also made sales to
	¹ https://www.google.com/maps/dir/El+Paso,+Texas/High+Rolls,+NM+88310/@32.3605831,-106.7215122,9z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m14!4m13!1m5!1m1!1s0x86e73f8bc5fe3b69:0xe39184e3ab9d0222!2m2!1d-106.4850217!2d31.7618778!1m5!1m1!1s0x86e0527948c76323:0x7312e022e4bda6e8!2m2!1d-105.8355422!2d32.950923!3e0

promote the sale of his rocking chairs. [Pre-Filed Testimony of Mr. McIntyre (Page 2, Response to Para. 5)]

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 $^{^{2} \}underline{\text{https://www.google.com/maps/place/Wichita+Falls,+TX/@33.9161526,-}} 98.5893987,12z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x865320927062daf5:0x1d06facbefea5200!8m2!3d33.9137085!4d-98.4933873}$

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³ Those sales are not relevant to the protest.

1	Protest and a Notice of Filing of Department's First Set of Discovery and Request for
2	Production and Interrogatories. [Administrative File]
3	27. On August 3, 2020, the Administrative Hearings Office entered a Notice
4	of Telephonic Scheduling Hearing which set an initial hearing on the protest for
5	September 4, 2020. [Administrative File]
6	28. An initial telephonic scheduling hearing occurred on September 4, 2020.
7	Neither party objected that the hearing would satisfy the 90-day hearing requirement of
8	NMSA 1978, Section 7-1B-8 (F). [Record of Hearing – 9/4/2020]
9	29. On September 10, 2020, the Administrative Hearings Office entered a
10	Scheduling Order and Notice of Telephonic Administrative Hearing. Among various
11	other deadlines, the notice set a hearing on the merits of the protest to occur on
12	November 18, 2020. [Administrative File]
13	30. Mr. McIntyre failed to appear for the scheduled hearing on November 18,
14	2020. Consequently, the Administrative Hearings Office entered a Decision and Order on
15	November 19, 2020 denying Taxpayer's protest for the reason that he failed to appear.
16	[Administrative File]
17	31. On December 18, 2020, Ms. Gutierrez submitted correspondence to the
18	Administrative Hearings Office which notified it of her entry of appearance and
19	requested that the Decision and Order entered on November 19, 2020 be reconsidered.
20	The correspondence stated that Ms. Gutierrez "faxed a notice of appeal yesterday evening
21	to the New Mexico Court of Appeals[.]" [Administrative File]
22	32. On December 21, 2020, the Department filed a response to Taxpayer's
23	request for reconsideration in a document it titled The Department Opposes the Motion

- 33. On January 7, 2021, the Administrative Hearings Office entered an Order Reconsidering and Setting Aside Decision and Order. The Hearing Officer observed that despite Ms. Gutierrez' representation that a notice of appeal was faxed to the New Mexico Court of Appeals on or about December 17, 2020, there was no indication that an appeal had actually been filed as of January 7, 2021 because the Administrative Hearings Office had not received a copy of a notice of appeal nor had a review of online court records on that date revealed the pendency of any appeal under a name associated with the protest. [Administrative File]
- 34. On January 7, 2021, the Administrative Hearings Office entered a Notice of Telephonic Scheduling Hearing which set a telephonic scheduling hearing on January 22, 2021. [Administrative File]
- 35. On February 10, 2021, the Administrative Hearings Office entered an Order Staying Proceedings Pending Determination of Appeal in Case No. A-1-CA-39442. The Hearing Officer observed that after the date upon which the scheduling hearing was set, online court records were updated to reflect an appeal was indeed pending in the above-captioned matter contrary to previous observations made on January 7, 2021. [Administrative File]
- 36. On August 19, 2021, the New Mexico Court of Appeals entered an Order Remanding to Administrative Hearings Office⁴ which remanded the case back to the Hearing Officer for further proceedings. [Administrative File; NMCA No. A-1-CA-39442]
- 37. On September 2, 2021, the Administrative Hearings Office entered a Notice of Telephonic Scheduling Hearing which set a scheduling hearing for September 17, 2021.

⁴ The procedural history summarized in these finding excludes all events in the New Mexico Court of Appeals after Taxpayer filed his Notice of Appeal until the protest was remanded to the Administrative Hearings Office for further proceedings. More detailed information regarding the proceedings in the Court of Appeals may be obtained from NMCA No. A-1-CA-39442.

"gross receipts" under the Gross Receipts and Compensating Tax Act and Taxpayer is entitled to a full abatement of the Assessment. On the other hand, if the sales were made inside of New Mexico, then the receipts derived from those sales are "gross receipts" and taxable.

Burden of Proof

Under NMSA 1978, Section 7-1-17 (C) (2007), the Assessment issued in this case is presumed correct. Unless otherwise specified, for the purposes of the Tax Administration Act, "tax" includes interest and civil penalty. *See* NMSA 1978, Section 7-1-3 (X) (2013). Therefore, under Regulation 3.1.6.13 NMAC, the presumption of correctness under Section 7-1-17 (C) also extends to the Department's assessment of penalty and interest. *See Chevron U.S.A., Inc. v. State ex rel. Dep't of Taxation & Revenue*, 2006-NMCA-050, ¶16, 139 N.M. 498, 134 P.3d 785 (agency regulations interpreting a statute are presumed proper and are to be given substantial weight).

For that reason, the presumption in favor of the Department requires that Taxpayer carry the burden to present countervailing evidence or legal argument to show that he is entitled to an abatement of the Assessment. *See N.M. Taxation & Revenue Dep't v. Casias Trucking*, 2014-NMCA-099, ¶8, 336 P.3d 436. "Unsubstantiated statements that the assessment is incorrect cannot overcome the presumption of correctness." *See MPC Ltd. v. N.M. Taxation & Revenue Dep't*, 2003-NMCA-021, ¶13, 133 N.M. 217, 62 P.3d 308; *See also* Regulation 3.1.6.12 NMAC. If a taxpayer presents sufficient evidence to rebut the presumption, then the burden shifts to the Department to re-establish the correctness of the assessment. *See MPC Ltd.*, 2003-NMCA-021, ¶13.

Gross Receipts Tax

For the privilege of engaging in business, New Mexico imposes a gross receipts tax on the receipts of any person engaged in business. *See* NMSA 1978, Section 7-9-4 (2002). Under

NMSA 1978, Section 7-9-3.5 (A) (1) (2007, Amended 2019), "gross receipts" is defined to mean:

the total amount of money or the value of other consideration received from selling property in New Mexico, from leasing or licensing property employed in New Mexico, from granting a right to use a franchise employed in New Mexico, from selling services performed outside New Mexico, the product of which is initially used in New Mexico, or from performing services in New Mexico.

(Emphases Added)

Under the Gross Receipts and Compensating Tax Act, all gross receipts of a person engaged in business are presumed taxable. *See* NMSA 1978, Section 7-9-5 (2002). Despite the general presumption of taxability, taxpayers may also avail themselves of the benefits of various deductions or exemptions, if applicable, or even assert that its receipts are entirely excludable from taxation under NMSA 1978, Section 7-9-3.5, because they do not come within the definition of "gross receipts," as Taxpayer claims in the present matter.

Location of Sales

The facts are simple and although documentary evidence was minimal, Taxpayer's testimony was extremely credible and persuasive when corroborated with what documentary evidence he could provide. In the years relevant to the Assessment, Taxpayer constructed rocking chairs at his home and shop in High Rolls, New Mexico. He would then load them onto a trailer and drive them to Texas where he would sell them to merchants for resale, or to individuals who happened to come across this trailer and admire his work, sometimes as he slept in his vehicle along side a road during breaks from the drive.

Taxpayer credibly testified that he made no sales in New Mexico during this period of time. He explained that he was in the process of selling his business, along with his copyrighted designs to a buyer in New Mexico. For that reason, Taxpayer explained it would have been improper and unethical for him to compete with the buyer who was selling furniture in New Mexico based on

Taxpayer's documentary records were minimal, at best, for unfortunate circumstances beyond his control. His workshop and home sustained heavy damage in a fire on February 9, 2018 in which all of his records were destroyed. The events were documented in Taxpayer Ex. 3. This event, however, did not leave Taxpayer without any evidence at all. The Hearing Officer found Taxpayer's testimony to be beyond reproach.

Credible witness testimony can have as much weight as documentary exhibits. In fact, it is not unusual in cases having even higher stakes and steeper burdens of proof, such as in criminal cases, that pivotal facts are established solely by testimonial evidence. *See e.g. State v. Singleton*, 2001-NMCA-054, 130 N.M. 583, 28 P.3d 1124; *State v. Nichols*, 2006-NMCA-017, 139 N.M. 72, 128 P.3d 500; *State v. Tapia*, 2015-NMCA-048, 347 P.3d 738; *State v. Landlee*, 1973-NMCA-143, 85 N.M. 726, 516 P.2d 697; *State v. Phillips*, 1971-NMCA-114, 83 N.M. 5, 487 P.2d 915; *State v. Estrada*, 2001-NMCA-034, 130 N.M. 358, 24 P.3d 793; *State v. Coffin*, 1999-NMSC-038, 128 N.M. 192, 991 P.2d 477; *State v. Granillo-Macias*, 2008-NMCA-021, 143 N.M. 455, 176 P.3d 1187.

In this case, Taxpayer: (1) credibly testified why he refused to sell rocking chairs in New Mexico; (2) credibly testified that all of his sales were made in Texas; (3) presented documentary evidence corroborating his already credible testimony regarding sales in Texas. The Hearing Officer also observed from a review of the entire record of the hearing that there was no evidence upon which to even infer sales occurring in New Mexico.

While MPC Ltd., ¶13, and Regulation 3.1.6.12 (A) NMAC do not allow a taxpayer to overcome the presumption of correctness with mere conclusory statements that the assessment is not correct, that is not what Taxpayer did in this protest. He proffered admissible and credible testimony that all of his sales were made outside of New Mexico as well as statements from uninterested third parties that were consistent with his testimony. In other words, Taxpayer did not rely merely on conclusory statements that the assessment was wrong, but provided credible, trustworthy, and reliable evidence showing why the Assessment was factually and legally incorrect.

For these reasons, the Hearing Officer was persuaded that Taxpayer's receipts from selling rocking chairs during the relevant periods of time derived from sales outside of New Mexico and are not "gross receipts" as the term is defined by the New Mexico Gross Receipts and Compensating Tax Act. Taxpayer's protest should be granted in full and the Assessment should be abated in its entirety because out-of-state sales of property are not "gross receipts."

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- A. Taxpayer filed a timely, written protest to the Assessment. Jurisdiction lies over the parties and the subject matter of this protest.
- B. The Department made a timely request for hearing and the Administrative Hearings Office conducted a hearing within 90 days of Taxpayer's protest under NMSA 1978, Section 7-1B-8 (2019).
- C. Taxpayer carries the burden to present countervailing evidence or legal argument to show entitlement to an abatement of an assessment. *See Casias Trucking*, 2014-NMCA-099, ¶8.
 - D. If a taxpayer presents sufficient evidence to rebut the presumption, then the

1	burden shifts to the Department to re-establish the correctness of the assessment. See MPC Ltd.,
2	2003-NMCA-021, ¶13.
3	E. "Gross receipts" do not include money derived from selling property outside of
4	New Mexico. See NMSA 1978, Section 7-9-3.5 (A) (1) (2007, Amended 2019); Kmart Corp. v.
5	Taxation & Revenue Dept., 2006-NMSC-006, ¶18, 139 N.M. 172, 176, 131 P.3d 22, 26 ("The
6	language 'selling property in New Mexico' means that the property as defined in the tax code
7	must be sold in New Mexico for it to be taxed[.]"
8	F. Taxpayer overcame the presumption of correctness by establishing that all relevant
9	receipts derived from the out-of-state sale of tangible personal property. See Section 7-1-17(C).
10	For the reasons stated, Taxpayer's protest is GRANTED. Taxpayer is entitled to a full
11	abatement of the Assessment.
12	DATED: April 29, 2022
13 14 15 16 17 18	Chris Romero Hearing Officer Administrative Hearings Office P.O. Box 6400 Santa Fe, NM 87502
19	NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL
20	Pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 7-1-25 (2015), the parties have the right to appeal this
21	decision by filing a notice of appeal with the New Mexico Court of Appeals within 30 days of the
22	date shown above. If an appeal is not timely filed with the Court of Appeals within 30 days, this
23	Decision and Order will become final. Rule of Appellate Procedure 12-601 NMRA articulates
24	the requirements of perfecting an appeal of an administrative decision with the Court of Appeals.
25	Either party filing an appeal shall file a courtesy copy of the appeal with the Administrative

Hearings Office contemporaneous with the Court of Appeals filing so that the Administrative 2 Hearings Office may begin preparing the record proper. The parties will each be provided with a copy of the record proper at the time of the filing of the record proper with the Court of Appeals, 3 which occurs within 14 days of the Administrative Hearings Office receipt of the docketing 4 5 statement from the appealing party. See Rule 12-209 NMRA. 6

1	CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
2	I hereby certify that I served the foregoing on the parties listed below this 29th day of April,
3	2022 in the following manner:
4 5	First Class Mail E- Mail
6	INTENTIONALLY BLANK

In the Matter of the Protest of Emmett D. McIntyre - High Rolls Home Furnishings Page 15 of 15