

Bond Case Briefs

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DirecTV, Inc. v. Town of New Hampton

Supreme Court of New Hampshire - May 26, 2017 - A.3d - 2017 WL 2323088

Taxpayer, a provider of satellite television service, filed petition for property tax abatement for satellite antennas and batteries used by taxpayer at its satellite uplink facility.

The Superior Court denied the petition.

The Supreme Court of New Hampshire held that:

- In determining whether personality constituted a fixture subject to property tax, proper focus was relationship of the personality to the realty itself, abrogating *Despatch Line of Packets v. Bellamy Man. Co.*, 12 N.H. 205, *Automatic Sprinkler Corp. v. Marston*, 94 N.H. 375, and *Lathrop v. Blake*, 23 N.H. 46;
- Satellite antennas were personality, rather than fixtures; and
- Batteries were personality, rather than fixtures.

Satellite antennas used by taxpayer at its satellite uplink facility in connection with its satellite television service were personality, rather than fixtures, and, thus, were not subject to property tax. Antennas were readily removable and transportable without affecting the utility of the underlying land or buildings, nothing about the land rendered the antennas unfit for other commercial or professional uses if they were removed, and, had the antennas been removed, the only articles associated with the antennas that would have remained on the land would have been concrete pads and underground wiring, neither of which would have detracted from the fitness of the property for other uses.

Batteries used by taxpayer to provide backup power at its satellite uplink facility in connection with its satellite television service were personality, rather than fixtures, and, thus, were not subject to property tax. Batteries were not affixed to a building, but were stored in steel racks and were easy to install and remove, removal of batteries would not have impaired function of building on the property, and batteries could be used at other facilities