



TDT Expansion Talking Points

House Tax Package

- The House Ways & Means Committee “tax package” includes the biggest expansion of the uses of tourism taxes ever proposed. This proposed expansion includes Tourist Development Taxes, the Convention Development Tax and the Local Option Food and Beverage Tax.
- The proposed changes expand these tourism taxes to include virtually any type of water related infrastructure project a city or county could think of including flood mitigation and septic to sewer conversion projects.
- While water quality is critical to our way of life and tourism in Florida, this expansion would do nothing to ensure that local governments actually use the funds to improve water quality in tourism related areas. Many will simply squander the funds to supplement their existing budgets and keep pointing the finger to someone else to clean up decades of deficient water management. This proposal all but eliminates funding for the essential tourism promotion activities tourism taxes were levied to create.
- There are no checks and balances within this legislation to ensure local governments use these funds only for prevention and clean-up of water quality issues.
- This is not the right solution for improving Florida’s water quality.
- The tourism industry, through property and sales tax revenues, already generates funds that can help pay for water quality improvement projects.

Current Uses of Tourist Development Taxes

- When these tourism taxes were authorized by the Florida Legislature, it was in partnership with Florida's hoteliers. These businesses approached Florida lawmakers to create a tax on their businesses to enable Florida communities to fund marketing activities to compete for visitors.
- Changing the current permissible uses of the tourism taxes is a breach of that agreement.
- Expanding the current uses of tourism taxes, is a new tax as counties would levy additional funds and divert other spending now funded by tourism taxes.
- Voters approved tourist development taxes in referendums because it provides the "seed money" necessary to stimulate the local tourism economy and keep visitors coming to the area.
- Changing the current use of those tourism taxes is a breach of the promises made to voters who approved those taxes within their community.
- It would weaken the local tourism industry costing jobs and sales tax revenue that is used to pay for critical services, such as public safety, education, health care and infrastructure.