

By the Committee on Utilities & Telecommunications and  
Representatives Ritter and Barreiro

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to public records; amending s.  
3           213.053, F.S.; providing an exemption from  
4           public records requirements for information  
5           contained in specified documents received by  
6           the Department of Revenue in connection with  
7           ch. 202, F.S., the Communications Services Tax  
8           Simplification Law; authorizing the department  
9           to provide certain information relative to said  
10          chapter to local governments imposing a local  
11          communications services tax; providing for  
12          application of confidentiality and penalty  
13          provisions to such local governments; providing  
14          for future review and repeal; providing a  
15          finding of public necessity; providing a  
16          contingent effective date.

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18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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20           Section 1. Subsection (1) of section 213.053, Florida  
21 Statutes, is amended, and paragraph (u) is added to subsection  
22 (7) of said section, to read:

23           213.053 Confidentiality and information sharing.--  
24           (1)(a) The provisions of this section apply to s.  
25 125.0104, county government; s. 125.0108, tourist impact tax;  
26 chapter 175, municipal firefighters' pension trust funds;  
27 chapter 185, municipal police officers' retirement trust  
28 funds; chapter 198, estate taxes; chapter 199, intangible  
29 personal property taxes; chapter 201, excise tax on documents;  
30 chapter 203, gross receipts taxes; chapter 211, tax on  
31 severance and production of minerals; chapter 212, tax on

1 sales, use, and other transactions; chapter 220, income tax  
2 code; chapter 221, emergency excise tax; s. 252.372, emergency  
3 management, preparedness, and assistance surcharge; s.  
4 370.07(3), Apalachicola Bay oyster surcharge; chapter 376,  
5 pollutant spill prevention and control; s. 403.718, waste tire  
6 fees; s. 403.7185, lead-acid battery fees; s. 538.09,  
7 registration of secondhand dealers; s. 538.25, registration of  
8 secondary metals recyclers; ss. 624.501 and 624.509-624.515,  
9 insurance code; s. 681.117, motor vehicle warranty  
10 enforcement; and s. 896.102, reports of financial transactions  
11 in trade or business.

12 (b) The provisions of this section also apply to  
13 chapter 202, the Communications Services Tax Simplification  
14 Law. This paragraph is subject to the Open Government Sunset  
15 Review Act of 1995 in accordance with s. 119.15, and shall  
16 stand repealed on October 2, 2006, unless reviewed and saved  
17 from repeal through reenactment by the Legislature.

18 (2) Except as provided in subsections (3), (4), (5),  
19 (6), (7), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15), (16),  
20 and (17), all information contained in returns, reports,  
21 accounts, or declarations received by the department,  
22 including investigative reports and information and including  
23 letters of technical advice, is confidential except for  
24 official purposes and is exempt from the provisions of s.  
25 119.07(1). Any officer or employee, or former officer or  
26 employee, of the department who divulges any such information  
27 in any manner, except for such official purposes, commits a  
28 misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s.  
29 775.082 or s. 775.083.

30 (3) The department shall permit a taxpayer, his or her  
31 authorized representative, or the personal representative of

1 an estate to inspect the taxpayer's return and may furnish him  
2 or her an abstract of such return. A taxpayer may authorize  
3 the department in writing to divulge specific information  
4 concerning the taxpayer's account.

5 (4) Nothing contained in this section shall prevent  
6 the department from publishing statistics so classified as to  
7 prevent the identification of particular accounts, reports,  
8 declarations, or returns or prevent the department from  
9 disclosing to the Comptroller the names and addresses of those  
10 taxpayers who have claimed an exemption pursuant to s.  
11 199.185(1)(i) or a deduction pursuant to s. 220.63(5).

12 (5) The department may make available to the Secretary  
13 of the Treasury of the United States or his or her delegate,  
14 the Commissioner of Internal Revenue of the United States or  
15 his or her delegate, the Secretary of the Department of the  
16 Interior of the United States or his or her delegate, or the  
17 proper officer of any state or his or her delegate,  
18 exclusively for official purposes, information to comply with  
19 any formal agreement for the mutual exchange of state  
20 information with the Internal Revenue Service of the United  
21 States, the Department of the Interior of the United States,  
22 or any state.

23 (6) Any information received by the Department of  
24 Revenue in connection with the administration of taxes,  
25 including, but not limited to, information contained in  
26 returns, reports, accounts, or declarations filed by persons  
27 subject to tax, shall be made available by the department to  
28 the Auditor General or his or her authorized agent, the  
29 Comptroller or his or her authorized agent, the Insurance  
30 Commissioner or his or her authorized agent, the Treasurer or  
31 his or her authorized agent, or a property appraiser or tax

1 collector or their authorized agents pursuant to s.  
2 195.084(1), in the performance of their official duties, or to  
3 designated employees of the Department of Education solely for  
4 determination of each school district's price level index  
5 pursuant to s. 236.081(2); however, no information shall be  
6 disclosed to the Auditor General or his or her authorized  
7 agent, the Comptroller or his or her authorized agent, the  
8 Insurance Commissioner or his or her authorized agent, the  
9 Treasurer or his or her authorized agent, or to a property  
10 appraiser or tax collector or their authorized agents, or to  
11 designated employees of the Department of Education if such  
12 disclosure is prohibited by federal law. The Auditor General  
13 or his or her authorized agent, the Comptroller or his or her  
14 authorized agent, the Treasurer or his or her authorized  
15 agent, and the property appraiser or tax collector and their  
16 authorized agents, or designated employees of the Department  
17 of Education shall be subject to the same requirements of  
18 confidentiality and the same penalties for violation of the  
19 requirements as the department. For the purpose of this  
20 subsection, "designated employees of the Department of  
21 Education" means only those employees directly responsible for  
22 calculation of price level indices pursuant to s. 236.081(2).  
23 It does not include the supervisors of such employees or any  
24 other employees or elected officials within the Department of  
25 Education.

26 (7) Notwithstanding any other provision of this  
27 section, the department may provide:

28 (a) Information relative to chapter 211, chapter 376,  
29 or chapter 377 to the proper state agency in the conduct of  
30 its official duties.

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1 (b) Names, addresses, and dates of commencement of  
2 business activities of corporations to the Division of  
3 Corporations of the Department of State in the conduct of its  
4 official duties.

5 (c) Information relative to chapter 212 and chapters  
6 561 through 568 to the Division of Alcoholic Beverages and  
7 Tobacco of the Department of Business and Professional  
8 Regulation in the conduct of its official duties.

9 (d) Names, addresses, and sales tax registration  
10 information to the Division of Hotels and Restaurants of the  
11 Department of Business and Professional Regulation in the  
12 conduct of its official duties.

13 (e) Names, addresses, taxpayer identification numbers,  
14 and outstanding tax liabilities to the Department of the  
15 Lottery and the Department of Banking and Finance in the  
16 conduct of their official duties.

17 (f) State tax information to the Nexus Program of the  
18 Multistate Tax Commission pursuant to any formal agreement for  
19 the exchange of mutual information between the department and  
20 the commission.

21 (g) Tax information to principals, and their  
22 designees, of the Revenue Estimating Conference for the  
23 purpose of developing official revenue estimates.

24 (h) Names and addresses of persons paying taxes  
25 pursuant to part IV of chapter 206 to the Department of  
26 Environmental Protection in the conduct of its official  
27 duties.

28 (i) Information relative to chapters 212 and 326 to  
29 the Division of Florida Land Sales, Condominiums, and Mobile  
30 Homes of the Department of Business and Professional  
31 Regulation in the conduct of its official duties.

1           (j) Information authorized pursuant to s. 213.0535 to  
2 eligible participants and certified public accountants for  
3 such participants in the Registration Information Sharing and  
4 Exchange Program.

5           (k) Payment information relative to chapters 199, 201,  
6 212, 220, and 221 to the Office of Tourism, Trade, and  
7 Economic Development in its administration of the tax refund  
8 program for qualified defense contractors authorized by s.  
9 288.1045 and the tax refund program for qualified target  
10 industry businesses authorized by s. 288.106.

11           (l) Information relative to chapter 212 to the Office  
12 of Agriculture Law Enforcement of the Department of  
13 Agriculture and Consumer Services in the conduct of the Bill  
14 of Lading Program. This information is limited to the business  
15 name and whether the business is in compliance with chapter  
16 212.

17           (m) Information relative to chapter 198 to the Agency  
18 for Health Care Administration in the conduct of its official  
19 business relating to ss. 409.901-409.910.

20           (n) Information contained in returns, reports,  
21 accounts, or declarations to the Board of Accountancy in  
22 connection with a disciplinary proceeding conducted pursuant  
23 to chapter 473 when related to a certified public accountant  
24 participating in the certified audits project, or to the court  
25 in connection with a civil proceeding brought by the  
26 department relating to a claim for recovery of taxes due to  
27 negligence on the part of a certified public accountant  
28 participating in the certified audits project. In any  
29 judicial proceeding brought by the department, upon motion for  
30 protective order, the court shall limit disclosure of tax  
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1 information when necessary to effectuate the purposes of this  
2 section. This paragraph is repealed on July 1, 2002.

3 (o) Information relative to ss. 376.70 and 376.75 to  
4 the Department of Environmental Protection in the conduct of  
5 its official business and to the facility owner, facility  
6 operator, and real property owners as defined in s. 376.301.

7 (p) Information relative to ss. 199.1055, 220.1845,  
8 and 376.30781 to the Department of Environmental Protection in  
9 the conduct of its official business.

10 (q) Names, addresses, and sales tax registration  
11 information to the Division of Consumer Services of the  
12 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in the conduct  
13 of its official duties.

14 (r) Information relative to the returns required by  
15 ss. 175.111 and 185.09 to the Department of Management  
16 Services in the conduct of its official duties. The Department  
17 of Management Services is, in turn, authorized to disclose  
18 payment information to a governmental agency as necessary in  
19 the administration of chapters 175 and 185.

20 (s) Names, addresses, and federal employer  
21 identification numbers, or similar identifiers, to the  
22 Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for use in the  
23 conduct of its official duties.

24 (t) Information relative to the tax exemptions under  
25 ss. 212.031, 212.06, and 212.08 for those persons qualified  
26 under s. 288.1258 to the Office of the Film Commissioner. The  
27 Department of Revenue shall provide the Office of the Film  
28 Commissioner with information in the aggregate.

29 (u) Information relative to chapter 202 to each local  
30 government that imposes a tax pursuant to s. 202.19 in the  
31 conduct of its official duties as specified in chapter 202.

1 Information provided under this paragraph may include, but is  
2 not limited to, any reports required pursuant to s. 202.231,  
3 audit files, notices of intent to audit, tax returns, and  
4 other confidential tax information in the department's  
5 possession relating to chapter 202. A person or an entity  
6 designated by the local government in writing to the  
7 department as requiring access to confidential taxpayer  
8 information shall have reasonable access to information  
9 provided pursuant to this paragraph. Such person or entity  
10 may disclose such information to other persons or entities  
11 with direct responsibility for budget preparation, auditing,  
12 revenue or financial administration, or legal counsel. Such  
13 information shall only be used for purposes related to budget  
14 preparation, auditing, and revenue and financial  
15 administration. Any information furnished to a local  
16 government, or to any person or entity designated by the local  
17 government as authorized by this paragraph, that is exempt  
18 from the provisions of s. 119.07(1) and s. 24(a), Art. I of  
19 the State Constitution pursuant to this section shall continue  
20 to be exempt when so provided, and may not be further  
21 disclosed except as provided by this paragraph.

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23 Disclosure of information under this subsection shall be  
24 pursuant to a written agreement between the executive director  
25 and the agency. Such agencies, governmental or  
26 nongovernmental, shall be bound by the same requirements of  
27 confidentiality as the Department of Revenue. Breach of  
28 confidentiality is a misdemeanor of the first degree,  
29 punishable as provided by s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

30 (8) The Department of Revenue shall provide returns,  
31 reports, accounts, or declarations received by the department,



1 including investigative reports and information, or  
2 information contained in such documents, pursuant to an order  
3 of a judge of a court of competent jurisdiction or pursuant to  
4 a subpoena duces tecum only when the subpoena is:  
5 (a) Issued by a state attorney, a United States  
6 attorney, or a court in a criminal investigation or a criminal  
7 judicial proceeding;  
8 (b) Issued by a state or federal grand jury; or  
9 (c) Issued by a state attorney, the Department of  
10 Legal Affairs, the State Fire Marshal, a United States  
11 attorney, or a court in the course of a civil investigation or  
12 a civil judicial proceeding under the state or federal  
13 racketeer influenced and corrupt organization act or under  
14 chapter 896.  
15 (9)(a) Notwithstanding other provisions of this  
16 section, the department shall, subject to paragraph (c) and to  
17 the safeguards and limitations of paragraphs (b) and (d),  
18 disclose to the governing body of a municipality, a county, or  
19 a subcounty district levying a local option tax, or any state  
20 tax which is distributed to units of local government based  
21 upon place of collection, which the department is responsible  
22 for administering, names and addresses only of the taxpayers  
23 granted a certificate of registration pursuant to s. 212.18(3)  
24 who reside within or adjacent to the taxing boundaries of such  
25 municipality, county, or subcounty district when sufficient  
26 information is supplied by the municipality, the county, or  
27 subcounty district as the department by rule may prescribe,  
28 provided such governing bodies are following s. 212.18(3)  
29 relative to the denial of an occupational license after the  
30 department cancels a dealer's sales tax certificate of  
31 registration.

1           (b) Such information shall be disclosed only if the  
2 department receives an authenticated copy of a resolution  
3 adopted by the governing body requesting it.

4           (c) After receipt of such information, the governing  
5 body and its officers and employees are subject to the same  
6 requirements of confidentiality and the same penalties for  
7 violating confidentiality as the department and its employees.  
8 The resolution requesting such information shall provide  
9 assurance that the governing body and its officers and  
10 employees are aware of those requirements and of the penalties  
11 for their violation of such requirements, and the resolution  
12 shall describe the measures that will be put into effect to  
13 ensure such confidentiality. The officer of the department  
14 who is authorized to receive, consider, and act upon such  
15 requests shall, if satisfied that the assurances in the  
16 resolution are adequate to assure confidentiality, grant the  
17 request.

18           (d) Nothing in this subsection authorizes disclosure  
19 of any information prohibited by federal law from being  
20 disclosed.

21           (10) Notwithstanding any other provision of this  
22 section, with respect to a request for verification of a  
23 certificate of registration issued pursuant to s. 212.18 to a  
24 specified dealer or taxpayer or with respect to a request by a  
25 law enforcement officer for verification of a certificate of  
26 registration issued pursuant to s. 538.09 to a specified  
27 secondhand dealer or pursuant to s. 538.25 to a specified  
28 secondary metals recycler, the department may disclose whether  
29 the specified person holds a valid certificate or whether a  
30 specified certificate number is valid or whether a specified  
31 certificate number has been canceled or is inactive or invalid

1 and the name of the holder of the certificate. This  
2 subsection shall not be construed to create a duty to request  
3 verification of any certificate of registration.

4 (11) The department may provide to a United States  
5 Trustee, or his or her designee, for any United States  
6 Bankruptcy Court, exclusively for official purposes in  
7 connection with administering a bankruptcy estate, information  
8 relating to payment or nonpayment of taxes imposed by any  
9 revenue law of this state by a trustee, debtor, or debtor in  
10 possession, including any amount paid or due.

11 (12) The department may disclose certain state sales  
12 tax information relating to the cancellation or revocation of  
13 sales and use tax certificates of registration for the failure  
14 to collect and remit sales tax. This information is limited to  
15 the sales tax certificate number, trade name, owner's name,  
16 business location address, and the reason for the cancellation  
17 or revocation.

18 (13) Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 896.102(2),  
19 the department may allow full access to the information and  
20 documents required to be filed with it under s. 896.102(1) to  
21 federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial  
22 agencies, and to the Department of Banking and Finance, and  
23 any of those agencies may use the information and documents in  
24 any civil or criminal investigation and in any court  
25 proceedings.

26 (14)(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this  
27 section, the department shall, subject to the safeguards  
28 specified in paragraph (c), disclose to the Division of  
29 Corporations of the Department of State the name, address,  
30 federal employer identification number, and duration of tax  
31 filings with this state of all corporate or partnership

1 entities which are not on file or have a dissolved status with  
2 the Division of Corporations and which have filed tax returns  
3 pursuant to either chapter 199 or chapter 220.

4 (b) The Division of Corporations shall use such  
5 information only in the pursuit of its official duties  
6 relative to nonqualified foreign or dissolved corporations in  
7 the recovery of fees and penalties due and owing the state.

8 (c) All information exchanged between the Division of  
9 Corporations and the department shall be subject to the same  
10 requirements of confidentiality as the Department of Revenue.

11 (15) The department may disclose confidential taxpayer  
12 information contained in returns, reports, accounts, or  
13 declarations filed with the department by persons subject to  
14 any state or local tax to the child support enforcement  
15 program, to assist in the location of parents who owe or  
16 potentially owe a duty of support pursuant to Title IV-D of  
17 the Social Security Act, their assets, their income, and their  
18 employer, and to the Department of Children and Family  
19 Services for the purpose of diligent search activities  
20 pursuant to chapter 39. Nothing in this subsection authorizes  
21 the disclosure of information if such disclosure is prohibited  
22 by federal law. Employees of the child support enforcement  
23 program and of the Department of Children and Family Services  
24 are bound by the same requirements of confidentiality and the  
25 same penalties for violation of the requirements as the  
26 department.

27 (16) The department may provide to the person against  
28 whom transferee liability is being asserted pursuant to s.  
29 212.10(1) information relating to the basis of the claim.

30 (17) The department may disclose to a person entitled  
31 to compensation pursuant to s. 213.30 the amount of any tax,

1 penalty, or interest collected as a result of information  
2 furnished by such person.

3           Section 2. The Legislature finds that it is a public  
4 necessity that any information or material contained in  
5 returns, reports, accounts, or declarations received by the  
6 Department of Revenue pursuant to chapter 202, Florida  
7 Statutes, be exempt from public records requirements. The  
8 disclosure of such information or material would adversely  
9 affect the business interests of communications service  
10 companies providing the information by harming them in the  
11 marketplace and compromising the security of the  
12 communications network. Further, disclosure of such  
13 information or material would impair competition in the  
14 communications industry. Disclosure of data which reveals the  
15 business interests of communications service companies creates  
16 a competitive disadvantage and an unfair advantage for its  
17 competitors. Competitors can use such information to impair  
18 full and fair competition and impede competition in the  
19 communications marketplace to the disadvantage of the  
20 consumers of communications services. Thus, the public and  
21 private harm in disclosing this information significantly  
22 outweighs any public benefit derived from disclosure, and the  
23 public's ability to scrutinize or monitor agency action is not  
24 diminished by nondisclosure of this information.

25           Section 3. This act shall take effect October 1, 2001,  
26 if House Bill        or similar legislation nullifying the repeal  
27 of ch. 202, Florida Statutes, is adopted in the same  
28 legislative session or an extension thereof and takes effect.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

Provides an exemption from public records requirements for information contained in specified documents received by the Department of Revenue in connection with ch. 202, F.S., the Communications Services Tax Simplification Law. Authorizes the department to provide certain information relative to said chapter to local governments imposing a local communications services tax and provides for application of confidentiality and penalty provisions to such local governments. Provides for future review and repeal.