

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 555 Tourist Development Tax

SPONSOR(S): Hooper

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Economic Development & Tourism Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N	Collins	West
2) Finance & Tax Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	Flieger	Langston
3) Economic Affairs Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill permits counties to use the tax revenues from the existing tourist development tax for purposes related to aquariums owned by not-for-profit organizations including the acquisition, construction, maintenance, or promotion of such aquariums.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state or local funds.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2013.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Current Situation

Tourist Development Tax

Section 125.0104, F.S., authorizes five separate tourist development taxes on transient rental transactions. Depending on a county's eligibility to levy, the tax rate varies from a minimum of 3 percent to a maximum of 6 percent. The levies may be authorized by vote of the county's governing authority or referendum approval. The revenues generated by the tax may be used in various ways to promote tourism, including capital construction of tourism-related facilities. The authorized uses of each local option tax vary according to the particular levy.

The tourist development tax may be levied at the rate of 1 or 2 percent. All 67 counties are eligible to levy this tax, and currently 62 levy this tax – all at 2 percent. Calhoun, Hardee, Lafayette, Liberty and Union counties do not levy any tourist development taxes. Revenue from this tax may be bonded to finance certain facilities and projects, including financing revenue bonds. This tax may only be levied after the ordinance is approved by a majority of voters in a referendum.

An additional tourist development tax of 1 percent may be levied by counties who have previously levied a tourist development tax at the 1 or 2 percent rate for at least 3 years. Currently 45 counties levy this tax. Revenue from this tax may be bonded to finance certain facilities and projects, but may not be used to service debt or refinance facilities receiving funding from a previously levied tourist development tax unless approved by an extraordinary vote of the governing board. This tax may only be levied after the ordinance is approved by a majority of voters in a referendum.

A professional sports franchise facility tax may be levied up to an additional 1 percent. Currently 36 counties levy this additional tax, and all 67 counties are eligible to levy this tax. Revenue can be used to pay debt service on bonds for the construction or renovation of professional sports franchise facilities, spring training facilities of professional sports franchises, and convention centers and to promote and advertise tourism.

An additional professional sports franchise facility tax no greater than 1 percent may be imposed by a county that has already levied the professional sports franchise facility tax. Out of 36 counties that levy a professional sports facility tax, 20 levy an additional professional sports franchise facility tax. Revenue can be used to pay debt service on bonds for the construction or renovation of professional sports franchise facilities, spring training facilities of professional sports franchises, and convention centers and to promote and advertise tourism.

A high tourism impact tax may be levied at an additional 1 percent. Five counties are eligible to levy this tax (Broward, Monroe, Orange, Osceola, and Walton). Of these five counties, Monroe, Orange, and Osceola levy this additional tax. Revenue from this tax may be bonded to finance certain facilities and projects, including financing revenue bonds.

Local option tourist taxes are significant revenue sources to Florida's county governments and represent important funding mechanisms for a variety of tourism-related expenditures such as beach and shoreline maintenance, construction of convention centers and professional sports franchise facilities, and tourism promotion. Generally, the revenues from these levies may be used for capital construction, maintenance, and promotion of tourist-related facilities, tourism promotion, and beach and shoreline maintenance. Tourist-related facilities include convention centers, sports stadiums and arenas, coliseums, zoos, auditoriums, aquariums and museums that are publically owned and operated within the area that the tax is levied. Museums and zoos that are operated by not-for-profit organizations may also receive funding.

Florida Aquariums

Visit Florida's website¹ lists over 25 attractions in the category of "aquarium," including the Key West Aquarium, the Miami Seaquarium, the Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium in Sarasota, the Florida Aquarium in Tampa, and the Florida's Gulfarium in Fort Walton Beach.

Proposed Changes

The bill adds aquariums owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations to the permissible uses of the tourist development tax, allowing counties to use revenue from that tax for purposes related to aquariums owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations, including the acquisition, construction, maintenance, or promotion of such aquariums.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Amends s. 125.0104, F.S., to include aquariums owned by not-for-profit organizations as an eligible use of the tourism development tax.

Section 2: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2013.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill will allow revenues from tourist development taxes to be used to benefit aquariums owned by not-for-profit organizations.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

¹ <http://www.visitflorida.com/aquariums> (last accessed 3/11/13)

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

The bill does not require a municipality or county to expend funds or to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds. The bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate. The bill does not require a reduction of the percentage of state tax shared with municipalities or counties.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES