

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Transportation

BILL: SB 1452

INTRODUCER: Senator Book

SUBJECT: Taximeters

DATE: March 27, 2017

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jones	Miller	TR	Pre-meeting
2.			ATD	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 1452 excludes any device that measures time and distance for the purpose of charging a fare for the transportation of persons in a motor vehicle from the definition of “weights and measures” for purposes of state regulation by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). As conforming changes, the bill removes a provision that such devices are exempt from state permit requirements if regulated by a local government, and removes reference to a \$50 maximum state permit fee for taximeters from law.

In effect, the bill will no longer require taximeters or other devices that measure time and distance to charge a fare for the transportation of persons in a motor vehicle be inspected or permitted by the FDACS.

The bill will have a negative recurring impact to the FDACS of \$129,500.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

II. Present Situation:

Currently, the Bureau of Standards within the FDACS is generally responsible for the inspection of weights and measures devices or instruments in Florida.¹ Section 531.37(1), F.S., defines “weights and measures” as all weights and measures of every kind, instruments, and devices for weighing and measuring, and any appliance and accessories associated with any or all such instruments and devices. The definition excludes those weights and measures used to inspect the accuracy of devices used in conjunction with aviation fuel.²

¹ See ch. 531, F.S., “Weights and Measures Act of 1971.”

² s. 531.37(1), F.S.

The FDACS responsibilities concerning weights and measures includes, but is not limited to:

- Establishing standards of weight, measure, or count and reasonable standards of fill for packaged commodities, as necessary;
- Providing exemptions to ch. 531, F.S., when appropriate to maintain good commercial practices within the state;
- Conducting investigations necessary to ensure compliance with ch. 531, F.S.;
- Testing annually the standards of weight and measure used by any city or county; and
- Inspecting and testing weights and measures commercially used to determine weight, measure, or count of goods being sold, or in computing the charge or payment for services rendered on the basis of weight, measure, or count.³

For the purpose of consumer protection, the Bureau of Standards is also empowered under s 531.42, F.S., to enforce the proper use of weights and measuring instruments or devices and the advertisement of the correct weight or measurement on a good for sale.

Taximeters

A taximeter is a device that automatically calculates at a predetermined rate or rates and indicate the charge for hire of a vehicle.⁴

A weights and measures instrument or device, which includes taximeters, may not be used for commercial purposes within the state without first being permitted by the FDACS.⁵ Section 531.63, F.S., provides that the commercial use permit fee, which is issued annually, for a taximeter may not exceed \$50. Currently, the annual permit fee for such taximeters is \$35.⁶ According to the FDACS, it currently permits approximately 3,700 taximeters annually.⁷

However, taximeters are exempt from such state permitting requirements if the taximeter is tested for accuracy and compliance with state standards by a local government and licensed, permitted, or registered by such local government.⁸ The extent of local government regulation and permitting of taximeters is unknown.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill excludes any device that measures time and distance for the purpose of charging a fare for the transportation of persons in a motor vehicle from the definition of “weights and measures” provided in s. 531.37(1), F.S. Because taximeters would no longer be subject to state regulation, the bill removes language that exempts taximeters from state weights and measures

³ Section 531.41, F.S.

⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology, *Handbook 44, Section 5.54 Taximeters* (2012), <https://www.nist.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pml/wmd/pubs/2011/10/26/5-54-12-hb44-final.pdf> (last visited Mar. 24, 2017).

⁵ Section 531.60, F.S.

⁶ FDACS, *Laws and Rules – Bureau of Standards* (January 2015), available at http://www.freshfromflorida.com/content/download/42262/890253/2015_STANDARDS_LAWS_&_RULES.pdf at p. 33 (last visited Mar. 24, 2017).

⁷ FDACS, *SB 1452 Agency Analysis* (Mar. 13, 2017) (on file with the Senate Committee on Transportation).

⁸ Section 531.61(1), F.S.

permit requirements if the device is locally regulated. In addition, the bill removes a reference to the \$50 maximum state permit fee for taximeters.

In effect, the bill will no longer require taximeters or other devices that measure time and distance to charge a fare for the transportation of persons in a motor vehicle be inspected or permitted by the FDACS.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The bill will have a positive impact on taxi drivers and other individuals who are currently required to have their weights and measures device permitted by FDACS to transport persons in a motor vehicle for a fare. It is unknown how much of this positive impact will be offset by a potential increase in local regulation of these devices.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill will have a negative recurring impact to the FDACS of \$129,500 due to the loss of permit fees.⁹ FDACS will no longer incur administrative costs or expenses related to the regulation and permitting of taximeters.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

⁹ FDACS, *SB 1452 Agency Analysis* (Mar. 13, 2017) (on file with the Senate Committee on Transportation).

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 531.37, 531.61, 531.63.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
