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April 30, 2025

SPECIAL EDITION VIII

2025 Florida Legislative Session Update - Week 8

**🔔 Legislative Alert - Urge the Florida Senate to Protect
the Future of Florida's Tourism and Hospitality
Industry 🔔**

With only one week remaining in the nine-week Regular Session, there were **two bills passed in the Florida House last week that would threaten the future of the Tourist Development Tax (TDT)**. In addition to the Local Option Taxes legislation that we have been engaged on all Session, there was also very harmful TDT language that was included in the proposed House and Senate Tax packages.

First, [HB 1221 - Local Option Taxes by Representative Monique Miller](#) was passed off the House Floor last Friday by a vote of 62 - 45. **Thank you to the twelve (12) Central Florida House Members who voted against this harmful bill including Republicans Rep. Doug Bankson, Rep. Debbie Mayfield, Rep. Rachel Plakon, Rep. David Smith, Rep. Paula Stark and every Democrat in the Central Florida Region.**

The bill has now been sent to the Senate and if passed, **this bill would:**

- **Completely stop the ability of counties to use TDTs for their intended purpose:** promoting tourism and marketing our destinations.
- **Eliminate County Tourism Promotion Agencies** (i.e. Visit Orlando, Experience Kissimmee, Seminole County Tourism, etc.)
- **Redirect almost all non-contracted TDT revenues to offset property taxes**, undermining the industry that drives Florida's economy.
- This would **stop all dedicated funds to tourism marketing and would result in a significant reduction in tourism to our community. It is not a tax cut, but a job killer.**
- The TDT's were established to ensure counties had a dedicated funding source (not paid by residents, but rather paid by visitors) for the tourism promotion efforts necessary to create jobs and generate local revenue for our local communities and small businesses including restaurants, retail, and more.

We urge all CFHLA members to participate in this urgent call to action, by taking a moment and sharing the negative impacts of this proposal with the Florida Senate. Your input will be very critical in the final negotiations between the House and Senate leadership in this week.

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Here are Some of the Key Talking Points:

1. This Bill Would Eliminate Florida's Competitive Advantage.

- Central Florida's economy is built on tourism. TDT fuels marketing efforts that generate **more than 464,000 jobs** and **\$92.5 billion in annual visitor spending within the region.**
- Without marketing the destination, **Central Florida will lose visitors, which will result in job losses and massive tax revenue declines.**

2. This is Not a Tax Cut - It's a Job Killer.

- TDT is a **self-imposed tax by the lodging industry** to grow visitation.
- **Every dollar of TDT generates many more dollars in local sales, job creation, and tax revenue.**

3. TDT is Not a Burden on Residents - it's a Benefit.

- **Only visitors pay TDT, not residents.** These dollars come from out-of-town guests and are reinvested to attract more.
- Eliminating TDT uses for tourism promotion means **residents will pay more in taxes over time**, not less and will **cost billions in lost economic activity.**
- Undermining that funding also **risks empty rooms, vacant tables, and lost jobs – hurting workers, business owners, and the very communities** that rely on their success.

4. Dissolving TDCs Silences Local Voices.

- TDCs ensure **accountability, oversight, and community involvement.**
- This amendment **replaces local governance with forced mandates from Tallahassee.**

5. We Don't Need to Break What's Working.

- Central Florida continues to celebrate the **number one destination in the country for tourism with over 74 million annually.**

- Now is the time to invest, not jeopardize in what is powering our economy.

Please reach out to your [Florida Senators today](#) OR CLICK on the link below to take action and urge the Florida Senate to protect tourism marketing and REJECT (AND/OR VOTE NO) on [HB 1221](#).

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Secondly, the Florida House passed the tax package ([HB 7033](#)) off the House Floor last Friday, by a vote of 78 - 29. **Thank you to the eight (8) Central Florida House Members who voted against this bill as well.**

The bill has now been sent to the Senate and if passed, **this bill would do much of the same in HB 1221, along with overriding tourism development tax statutes by allowing counties to tap into that money for general uses while property taxes are cut.**

We urge all CFHLA members to once again participate in this urgent call to action, by taking a moment and sharing the negative impacts of these legislative proposals with the members of the Florida Senate.

Your input will be extremely helpful in the final negotiations between the House and Senate leadership this week.

Here are another few Key Talking Points:

- **The Savings to Residents Are Minimal - The Damage is Massive.**
- The average TDT is a tiny fraction of property tax revenues. (Statewide average: 11.3% of property taxes.)
- **Wiping out TDT will do virtually nothing to reduce property taxes - but it will cost billions in lost economic activity.**

Once again, please reach out to your [Florida Senators today](#) OR CLICK on the link below to take action and urge the Florida Senate to NOT to accept the House's proposal on TDT in [HB 7033](#). Tell them how our industry supports jobs, small businesses, and the economic vitality of your community.

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Other CFHLA Legislative Priorities



With the start of week nine, we only have 3 days left and there are still several bills that would significantly impact the future of the tourism industry. Plus there **is still roughly \$4 billion in differences between the two legislative budget proposals for the fiscal year of 2025-2026.**

Therefore, CFHLA and our leadership team will continue to stay engaged as we educate and advocate for the desired outcome of our ten **2025 CFHLA Legislative Priorities**. Below is an update on each of the issues that are extremely important to the hospitality and tourism industry at both the state and local level.

Tourist Development Tax (TDT)

Our primary focus this session has been in strong opposition to several proposals related to TDT.

This includes [SB 1664 by Senator Jay Trumbull](#), which is now awaiting a vote on the Senate Floor.

If passed, **SB 1664** would:

- Require all counties to pass a referendum to renew any existing TDTs by 2033.
- The Senate Bill mandates a new voter referendum in 2033. However, if passed it could then exist in perpetuity.
- This would pull dedicated funds away from tourism marketing and the long-term impact could result in a significant reduction in tourism to our destination. The TDT's were established to ensure counties had a dedicated funding source (not paid by residents, but rather paid by visitors) for the tourism promotion efforts necessary to create jobs and generate local revenue for our local communities and small businesses including restaurants, retail, and more.
- Exempt any TDTs that are bonded from these sunset provisions.

[SB 1664](#) by Senator Trumbull – This amended bill was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on April 22, 2025, by a vote of 11 - 6. This bill is now awaiting a final vote on the Senate Floor.

Secondly, the Senate added to their Tax Proposal, [SB 7034](#), a clause that would **create a new \$50 million expenditure cap for TDT revenue that is spent on tourism marketing, before revenue may now be used for public facilities.** Furthermore, the House added to language that would revise the approved uses of the Original, Additional, and High Tourism Impact TDTs in two ways. **This includes allowing all coastal counties to use funds for the provision of beach lifeguards certified by an approved entity, and allowing coastal fiscally-constrained counties to use funds for certain capital improvements.**

Simply put, CFHLA is opposed to both of these clauses being included.

Lastly, **CFHLA strongly opposes adding any additional approved uses for Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues.** Adding additional approved uses will only serve to dilute the effectiveness of these dollars, which are statutorily established for the promotion of marketing of tourism. This includes our opposition to the following bills:

HB 6031 by Representative Eskamani – **No action was taken in the House last week.**

SB 1114 by Senator Guillermo Smith – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

SB 1116 by Senator Guillermo Smith – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

CFHLA OPPOSES

Clarifying Transient Occupancy (No Pay, No Stay)

CFHLA supports making the necessary changes to Florida Statutes, to **provide more clarity to guests, law enforcement, and lodging establishments regarding the removal of disruptive, violent, law-breaking, and non-paying guests from their property.**

Thank you Senator Leek for your leadership in passing [SB 606](#) off the Senate Floor last week.

While we have had issues with service charges language in the House's proposed bill, we received good news today!

Today, the Florida House amended [HB 535](#) to allow for our hotels to **continue to charge an “operations charge” (new terminology for service charges) on all banquet, catering, or event services.**

This is no longer optional to pay by the customer (such as a previous version of the bill), and the **Operations charge” means an automatic fee or**

charge, other than a government-imposed tax, that a customer is required to pay in addition to the cost of the food and beverage purchased. The term includes, but is not limited to, service charges, automatic gratuities, credit card surcharges, and delivery fees.

If this language is included in the final bill that is sent to the Governor, **this will not take effect until July 1, 2026.** However, **the no pay, no stay language will take effect July 1, 2025.**

HB 535 by Representative Johnson – **This bill was approved by the House Commerce Committee on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, by a vote of 22 - 3. The bill is now awaiting a vote on the House Floor this week.**

SB 606 by Senator Leek – **The bill was approved on the Senate Floor by a vote of 35 - 1 on April 16, 2025.** This bill is was then sent to the House for consideration and final passage.

CFHLA SUPPORTS A PROPOSED BILL WITH THE AMENDMENT INCLUDED

Timeshare Revisions (PASSED)

CFHLA supported both of [ARDA's](#) legislative proposals, including making timeshare-specific changes to the provisions passed in two condo/HOA bills passed during the 2024 Florida Legislative Session (HB 1021 and HB 1203).

Thank you to Senator McClain and Representative Berfield for your leadership on these important proposals. With your support, HB 897 will now be sent to the Governor for final consideration and signature into law.

HB 897 by Representative Berfield – **The bill was approved on the House Floor by a vote of 115 - 0 on April 23, 2025.** This bill is was then sent to the Senate for consideration and final passage.

SB 496 by Senator McClain – **The bill was approved by a vote of 18-0 during the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee on April 22, 2025. The bill was then approved on the Senate Floor by a vote of 36 - 0 on April 28, 2025.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

Visit Florida Funding

CFHLA supports the Governor's proposed budget, which includes **\$80 million in annual funding for VISIT FLORIDA (same from FY 2024-2025)**. Funding of VISIT FLORIDA ensures Florida continues to be top of mind as a leading vacation destination.

Currently, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget proposals **include the full \$80 million in annual funding for VISIT FLORIDA (same from FY 2024-2025)**. This is great news as we remain steadfast in our support of Visit Florida and its full and continued funding.

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Increased Funding for Transportation and Infrastructure Projects

CFHLA supports the **increased funding of essential transportation and infrastructure projects** across the Central Florida region (excluding using TDT funds).

Within the Governor's proposed budget, includes **\$13.8 billion for the Florida Department of Transportation Work Program**, which is used for the construction and maintenance of Florida's roads, bridges, rails, seaports and other public transportation systems that grow the state's economy and improve the quality of life for our citizens. This includes "The Moving Florida Forward Plan" which is designed to accelerate the development and completion of important transportation infrastructure projects, including the plan to resurface 80 lane miles and add 54 lanes in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Currently, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget proposals **include \$12.98 billion and \$13.99 billion respectively, for the Florida Department of Transportation Work Program.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

Additional Education Funding for Hospitality/Culinary Programs at our Local Schools, Colleges, and Universities

CFHLA supports **additional funding for our hospitality and culinary programs at our local high schools, as well as the increased per-student funding at Valencia College, Seminole State College, and the University of Central Florida.**

To date, Valencia College and Seminole State College are **among the lowest per student funding institutions in the state.** This is why it is imperative that CFHLA supports the **Florida College System Council of**

Presidents allocation request of \$200 million (using their formula) in new, recurring funds to help recruit and retain the best faculty and invest in rapid credentialing workforce development programs that increase capacity within our region (including new and existing advanced accelerated programs).

This also includes our support of the following proposed bill that would create a new funding formula for the state college system and establishes a floor of funding per student in Florida.

Currently, the Florida Senate budget proposal includes \$100 million of the \$200 million allocation request from the Florida College System Council of Presidents and the House budget proposal includes \$40 million.

[HB 1307](#) by Representative Temple – No action was taken in the House last week.

CFHLA SUPPORTS

Workforce Housing

CFHLA supports the continued full funding of the Sadowski Fund, as the Central Florida community has a dire need for more reliable and affordable housing options. CFHLA remains steadfast in our support of fully funding our much needed workforce housing programs, along with seeking **modifications to the Live Local Act.**

CFHLA supports the Governor's proposed budget, **which fully funds affordable and workforce housing programs at \$506.2 million.** This includes \$227.7 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program and \$178.5 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and \$100 million for the fourth year of the Hometown Heroes Housing Program, which helps make homeownership more affordable for eligible frontline community workers and other Florida families.

Currently, **the Florida Senate proposed budget includes a total funding of \$403.8 million for affordable and workforce housing programs.**

Specifically, \$71.2 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program, \$182.6 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and \$150 million for the fourth year of the Hometown Heroes Housing Program.

In the Florida House, the proposed budget includes \$285 million in total funding for affordable and workforce housing programs. This includes the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program, State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and the Hometown Heroes Housing Program.

HB 247 by Representative Conerly – **This bill was approved by the House Commerce Committee on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, by a vote of 18 - 6.**

This bill has now been added to the Second Reading Calendar and will be considered on the House Floor.

SB 184 by Senator Gaetz – **This bill was approved by the full Senate on April 9, 2025 by a vote of 37 - 0. The bill is now awaiting final consideration on the House Floor.**

HB 923 by Representative Lopez – **No action was taken in the House last week.**

SB 1594 by Senator McClain – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.** This bill was added to the Senate Community Affairs Committee agenda for Tuesday, March 25, 2025. However, the bill was not considered during the committee meeting.

HB 685 by Representative Alvarez – **No action was taken in the House last week.**

SB 1036 by Senator Rodriguez – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

Commercial Property Insurance Reform

CFHLA supports any legislative efforts that are aimed at **reducing the cost of commercial insurance in Florida.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

Statewide Regulation of Vacation Rentals and Advertising Platforms

CFHLA strongly supports requiring initiatives that ensure **vacation home rentals on advertising platforms also practice the same safety standards as traditional lodging to protect visitors and their experience.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

Interchange Fees on Sales Tax (Eliminate Swipe Fees)

CFHLA supports **prohibiting the collection of interchange on sales tax,** which will provide relief to businesses, which will in turn provide relief to consumers.

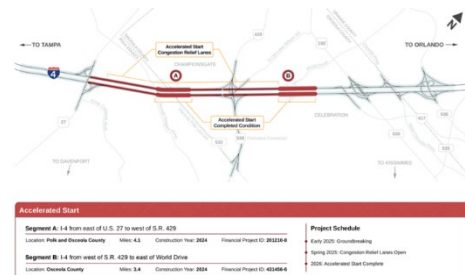
CFHLA SUPPORTS

Initial Phase of Moving I-4 Forward Opens Ahead of Schedule



This week, we received notice of a major transportation milestone: the early completion of the initial phase of the **Moving I-4 Forward Accelerated Start Project**. Originally slated for late 2025, this key portion is now open to drivers - ahead of schedule by eight months. Governor Ron DeSantis, alongside Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Jared Perdue, announced the achievement during a press conference on April 14, 2025.

The Accelerated Start Project was focused on constructing new congestion relief lanes, by adding one general use lane in each direction along the I-4 corridor. These new lanes will significantly enhance regional connectivity by improving travel times and increasing vehicle capacity. The result: a smoother, safer, and more reliable driving experience for locals and visitors alike.



This achievement was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the Moving I-4 Forward team and we look forward to its positive impact on our infrastructure and the Central Florida tourism industry this summer.

[CLICK HERE
TO](#)

Schedule for Session Week 9 (April 28 - May 2, 2025)

To view the Senate's schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

To view the House's schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

Seeking Nominations to Serve on the CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors



The [CFHLA Political Action Committee and CFHLA Political Committee](#) are bi-partisan committees that protect the interests of the hospitality and tourism industry by educating and mobilizing our members to become more politically active, as well as supporting candidates for state and local office who are pro-tourism and pro-hospitality.

Currently, there are seven (7) vacancies on the CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors and we are seeking qualified lodging and allied candidates to serve on the CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors beginning May 28, 2025.

If you are interested in learning more about these vacancies, please contact CFHLA President & CEO Robert Agrusa at robert.agrusa@cfhla.org.

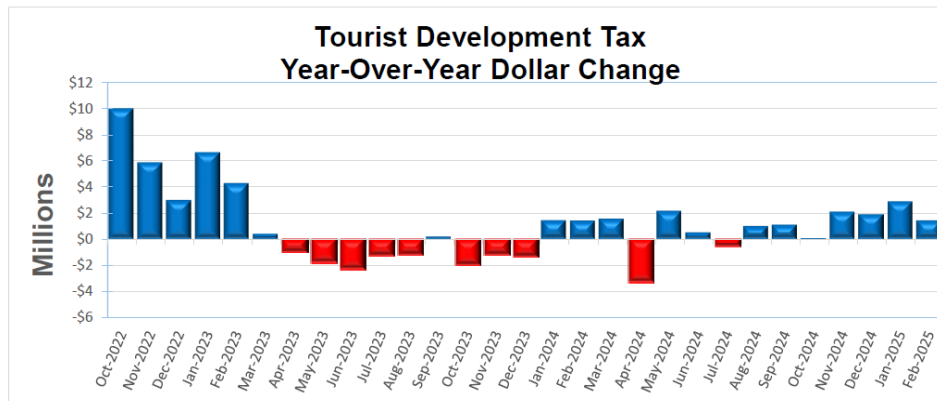
Regional Tourist Development Tax Update

Orange County

The Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collections received by Orange County for the month of **February 2025 were \$35,483,300**. That is a **4.2% increase** compared to February 2024 and **highest February collection ever**.

Compared to February 2023, Orange County TDT collections **were higher by \$2.8 million in February 2025**.

The chart below shows monthly TDT collections for the current fiscal year and the previous three fiscal years.



Osceola County

Osceola County collected **\$7.7 million for the month of February 2025, representing a 4% increase from February 2024**.

By the Numbers: TDT Collections



Collections for February 2025 totaled **\$7.7M**, up 4% compared to the prior year.

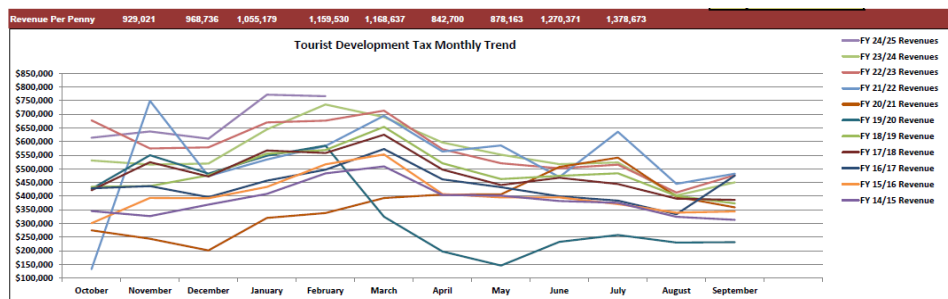
Source: Osceola County Tax Collector



Seminole County

Seminole County announced that the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collection for the month of February 2025 was at \$766,503, which represented a 4.2% increase from February 2024.

For the FY 2024 - 2025, Seminole County has now collected \$3,400,455 in TDT which is 25.8% ahead of the pace from the FY 2023-2024.



Upcoming CFHLA PAC/PC Meeting

The next CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors Meeting will take place next week, **Wednesday, May 7, 2025 from 8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. at the CFHLA office.**

Upcoming Governmental Affairs Meeting

The next CFHLA Governmental Affairs meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025 from 12:00 noon - 1:30 PM.**

DONATE to the CFHLA PAC

CFHLA MEMBERS - Please **consider making a small donation of \$50** via the link below to the CFHLA PAC/PC. All contributions help CFHLA expand its efforts to support Hospitality-Friendly candidates who are running for local and state offices in the future. **Throughout the 2024 Election Cycle, 27 of 31 or 87% of the PAC endorsed candidates were elected into office.**

[DONATE](#)

IN THE NEWS

[Ben Albritton: Stalemate between House, Senate on tax cuts guarantees Session overtime](#) - Florida Politics

[Counties and cities are wary of hotel tax changes as House advances tax package](#) - Florida Politics

[House proposes killing all tourist development councils in Florida-](#)
Florida Politics

[House advances tax package as tourism leaders fear repercussions from hotel tax changes-](#) Florida Politics

[Field set for Special Election to fill Geraldine Thompson's Senate seat](#) -
Florida Politics

[RaShon Young becomes first candidate to file for HD 40 Special Election](#) -
Florida Politics

[Travaris McCurdy seeks a return to House in HD 40 Special Election-](#)
Florida Politics

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About CFHLA

6675 Westwood Blvd #210, Orlando, FL 32821

The mission of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service.