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March 25, 2025

SPECIAL EDITION III

2025 Florida Legislative Session Update - Week 3

With Week three of the nine-week Session now concluded, **legislation impacting the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) has started to move** in the House and will continue to move in the Senate this week.

This week marks the start of week four, a crucial period for bills that have yet to be heard, as they must be scheduled on an agenda soon or risk being left

behind when subcommittees stop meeting shortly after the session's midpoint.

Over the next 38 days, CFHLA and our leadership team will continue to educate and advocate for the desired outcome of our ten **2025 CFHLA Legislative Priorities**. This includes our advocacy at the Capitol this week, for **Florida Tourism Day on Wednesday, March 26, 2025**. 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)

CFHLA is in strong opposition to several bills that would either **add a new or expanded use for Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues** or **require the periodic readoption of the TDT through local voter referendum**.

A significant bill related to the future collection of Tourist Development Taxes has now moved through its first committee, [HB 1221 - Local Option Taxes by Representative Monique Miller](#). This week will be a key moment to educate lawmakers and push back against its harmful provisions.

If passed, **HB 1221/SB 1664** would:

- Require all counties to pass a referendum to renew any existing TDTs by 2033.
- Mandate a new voter referendum every eight years for continued use of TDTs, but allows for a 30-year renewal if the funds collected are used to pay down bonds or other debts.
- 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.

[HB 1221](#) by Representative Miller – The bill was approved by a vote of 13 - 4 during the the House Ways & Means Committee last Thursday, March 20th. This bill is now in the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and this is the second of three committee stops.

[HB 1664](#) by Senator Trumbull – No action was taken in the Senate last week. However, the bill was added to the Senate Community Affairs Committee agenda for Tuesday, March 25th.

Additionally, **CFHLA strongly opposes adding any additional approved used 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

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.

Late last week, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget chairs began their respective budget processes and hearings will begin as early as this week. CFHLA will remain steadfast in our support of Visit Florida and its full and continued funding.

CFHLA SUPPORTS



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.

Late last week, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget chairs began their respective budget processes and hearings will begin as early as this week.

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.**

Currently, 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.

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

Late last week, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget chairs also began their respective budget processes and hearings will begin as early as this week.

CFHLA SUPPORTS



Workforce Housing

CFHLA supports the continued full funding for the Sadowski Fund, as the Central Florida community has a dire need for more reliable and affordable housing options.

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.

As the Florida Senate and Florida House begin to prepare their respective budgets, CFHLA will remain steadfast in our support of fully funding these much needed workforce housing programs, along with seeking **modifications to the Live Local Act.**

HB 247 by Representative Conerly – **No action was taken in the House last week.** The bill was approved by a vote of 15-2 during the House Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee on Tuesday, March 11th. This bill is now in the House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, and this is the second of three Committee stops.

SB 184 by Senator Gaetz – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.** The bill was approved by a vote of 15-0 during the Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Economic Development on Monday, March 10th. This bill is now in the Senate Rules Committee, and this is the last of three committee stops.

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. However, this bill was added to the Senate Community Affairs Committee agenda for Tuesday, March 25th.**

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

Timeshare Revisions

CFHLA supports 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).

HB 897 by Representative Berfield – **No action was taken in the House last week.**

SB 496 by Senator McClain – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

CFHLA SUPPORTS

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.

However, the amended bill now includes language which:

- Prohibits public food service establishments from including automatic gratuity or service charges in the price of food or beverages for parties of less than six (6) guests.
- The amended bill defines “gratuity” and “service charge” as any type of charge or required payment other than the price of the food or beverages.
- Public food service establishments may include automatic gratuity or service charges in the price of food or beverages for parties of six (6) or more guests. However, a public food service establishment that includes an automatic gratuity or service charge, must provide notice of the automatic charge on the face of every item provided to a guest and receipt required to be signed by a guest, in addition to being on the food menu which is required by current law. The notice must list the person or business entity receiving the gratuity or service charge and the percentage they are receiving.
- A public food service establishment may not require a guest to pay an automatic gratuity or service charge if the guest requests not to pay such gratuity or service charge.
- The amended bill also provides that if a public food establishment bases an automatic or suggested gratuity or service charge on the price of food or beverages, the gratuity or service charge must be based on the price of the food or beverages before taxes.

HB 535 by Representative Johnson – **No action was taken in the House last week. The bill was approved by a vote of 14-3 during the House Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee on Monday, March 10th. This bill is now in the House Criminal Justice Committee,** and this is the second of three Committee stops.

SB 606 by Senator Leek – **No action was taken in the Senate last week. The bill was approved by a vote of 8-0 during the Senate Regulated Industries Committee on Wednesday, March 12th. This bill is now in the Senate Criminal Justice Committee,** and this is the second of three Committee stops.

CFHLA SUPPORTS WITHOUT THE AMENDMENTS

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

Schedule for Session Week 5 (March 31 - April 4, 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.

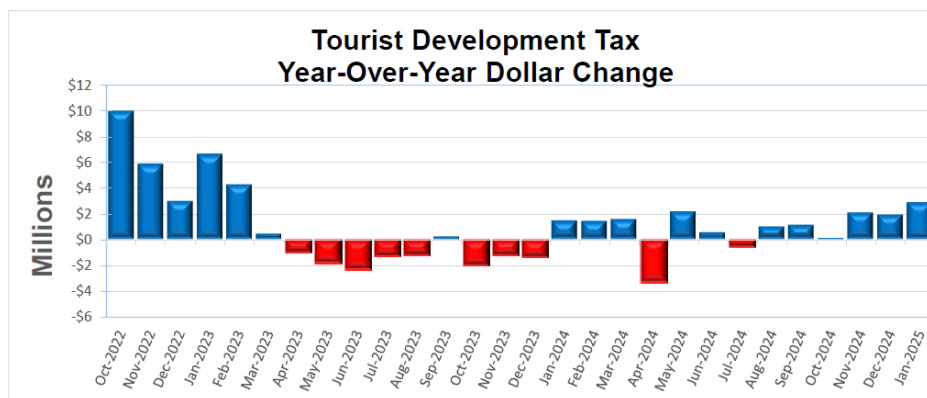
Regional Tourist Development Tax Update

Orange County

The Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collections received by Orange County for the month of **January 2025 were \$33,384,900**. That is a **9.5% increase** compared to January 2024 and **highest monthly collection ever!**

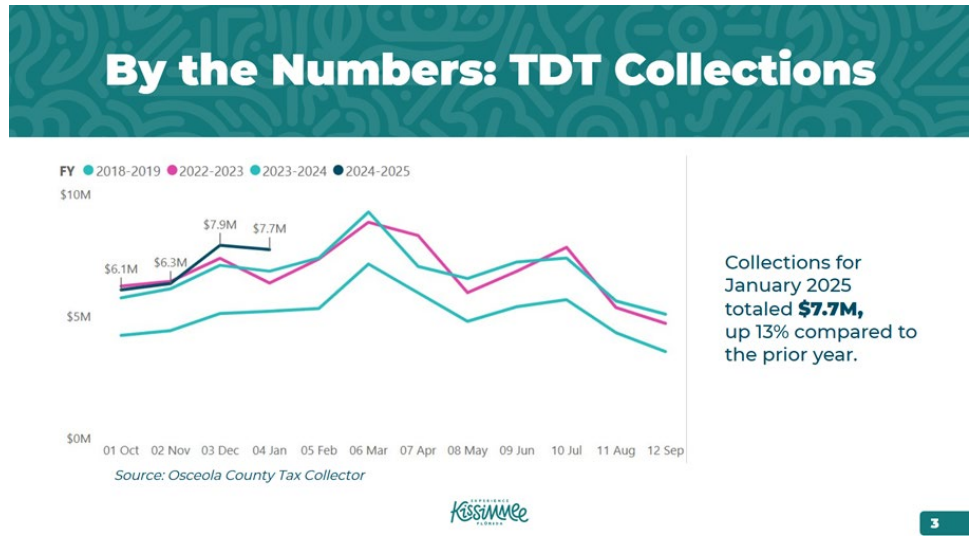
Compared to last month, **January 2025 collections were higher than December 2024 collections by \$1.6 Million**. In addition, **January 2025 Collections were higher than January 2023 collections by \$4.3 million**.

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



Osceola County

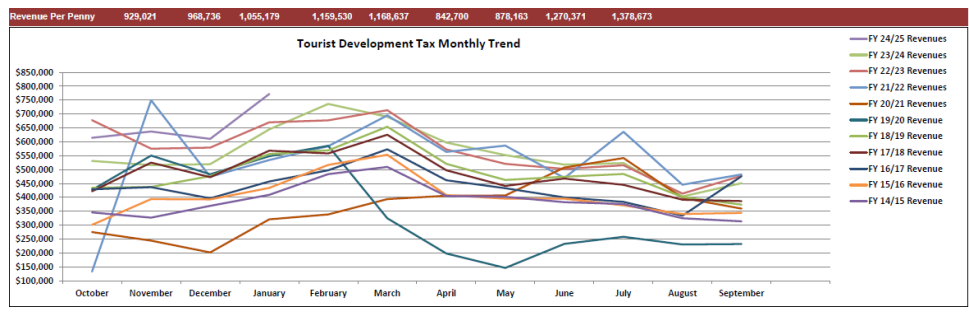
Osceola County collected **\$7,700,000** in TDT for the month of January 2025, representing a 13% increase from January 2024.



Seminole County

Seminole County announced that the **Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collection for the month of January was at \$771,968**, which represented a **19.7% increase from January 2024**.

For the FY 2024 - 2025, **Seminole County has now collected \$2,633,952 Million in TDT** which is **24.1% 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 on **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 at the Holiday Inn Orlando - International Airport (thank you, R.P. Rama) from 12:00 noon - 1:30 PM.**

DONATE to 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

[First-ever Florida Tourism Day Expo comes to Tallahassee Wednesday](#) - Florida Politics

[Major changes could be coming to SunRail, Brightline near Disney World](#) - Wesh 2

[Jacksonville Jaguars' potential Orlando stint could bring surge in hotel demand. Here's what's projected](#) - Orlando Business Journal

[Orlando sports commission seeks millions to draw major WWE, UFC events](#) - Orlando Business Journal

- Florida Politics [LaVon Bracy Davis announces plans to seek Geraldine Thompson's Senate seat](#)

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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.