

Charter County Transit System Surtax

Section 212.055(1), Florida Statutes

Brief Overview

The Charter County Transit System Surtax may be levied at a rate of up to 1 percent by those charter counties that adopted a charter prior to January 1, 1984, as well as by those county governments that have consolidated with one or more municipalities. In the case of charter counties, the levy is subject to a charter amendment approved by a majority vote of the county's electorate. In the case of a consolidated government, the levy is subject to voter approval in a countywide referendum. Generally, the use of the proceeds is for the development, construction, operation, and maintenance of fixed guideway rapid transit systems, bus systems, and roads and bridges.

General Law Amendments

Legislation passed during the 2008 Regular Legislative Session did not affect provisions related to this revenue source.

Authorization to Levy

Charter counties that adopted a charter prior to January 1, 1984, and county governments that have consolidated with one or more municipalities, may levy this surtax at a rate of up to 1 percent, subject to approval by a majority vote of the county's electorate or a charter amendment approved by a majority vote of the county's electorate.

Counties Eligible to Levy

The seven counties eligible to levy this surtax are Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Pinellas, Sarasota, and Volusia.

Distribution of Proceeds

The surtax proceeds shall be deposited into the county trust fund or remitted by the county's governing body to an expressway or transportation authority created by law.

Authorized Uses of Proceeds

The surtax proceeds shall be applied to as many or as few of the following uses as the county's governing body deems appropriate.

1. Deposited into the county trust fund and used for the purposes of development, construction, equipment, maintenance, operation, supportive services, including a countywide bus system, and related costs of a fixed guideway rapid transit system.
2. Remitted by the county's governing body to an expressway or transportation authority created by law to be used at the authority's discretion for the development, construction, operation, or maintenance of roads or bridges in the county, for the operation and maintenance of a bus system, for the payment of principal and interest on existing bonds issued for the construction of such roads or bridges, and, upon approval of the county commission, such proceeds may be pledged for bonds issued to refinance existing bonds or new bonds issued for the construction of such roads or bridges.
3. Used by the charter county for the development, construction, operation, and maintenance of roads and bridges in the county; for the expansion, operation, and maintenance of bus and fixed guideway systems; for the payment of principal and interest on bonds issued for the construction of fixed guideway rapid transit systems, bus systems, roads, or bridges; and such proceeds may be pledged by the county's governing body for bonds issued to refinance existing bonds or new bonds issued for the construction of such fixed guideway rapid transit systems, bus systems, roads, or bridges and no more than 25 percent used for nontransit uses.
4. Used by the charter county for the planning, development, construction, operation, and maintenance of roads and bridges in the county; for the planning, development, expansion, operation, and maintenance of bus and fixed guideway systems; for the payment of principal and interest on bonds issued for the construction of fixed guideway rapid transit systems, bus systems, roads, or bridges; and such proceeds may be pledged by the county's governing body for bonds issued to refinance existing bonds or new bonds issued for the construction of such fixed guideway rapid transit systems, bus systems, roads, or bridges. Pursuant to an interlocal agreement entered into pursuant to ch. 163, F.S., the charter county's governing body may distribute surtax proceeds to a municipality, or an expressway or transportation authority created by law to be expended for such purposes.

Relevant Attorney General Opinions

No opinions specifically relevant to this surtax have been issued.

Local Government Infrastructure Surtax

Section 212.055(2), Florida Statutes

Brief Overview

The Local Government Infrastructure Surtax shall be levied at the rate of 0.5 or 1 percent pursuant to an ordinance enacted by a majority vote of the county's governing body and approved by voters in a countywide referendum. Generally, the proceeds must be expended to finance, plan, and construct infrastructure; to acquire land for public recreation or conservation or protection of natural resources; and to finance the closure of local government-owned solid waste landfills that are already closed or are required to close by order of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Additional spending authority exists for select counties.

General Law Amendments

Legislation passed during the 2008 Regular Legislative Session did not affect provisions related to this revenue source.

Authorization to Levy

Local governments may levy this surtax at a rate of 0.5 or 1 percent. This levy shall be pursuant to an ordinance enacted by a majority of the members of the county's governing body and approved by the voters in a countywide referendum. In lieu of action by the county's governing body, municipalities representing a majority of the county's population may initiate the surtax through the adoption of uniform resolutions calling for a countywide referendum on the issue. If the proposal to levy the surtax is approved by a majority of the electors, the levy shall take effect.

Additionally, the surtax may not be levied beyond the time established in the ordinance if the surtax was levied pursuant to a referendum held before July 1, 1993. If the pre-July 1, 1993 ordinance did not limit the period of the levy, the surtax may not be levied for more than 15 years. There is no state-mandated limit on the length of levy for those surtax ordinances enacted after July 1, 1993. The levy may only be extended by voter approval in a countywide referendum.

This surtax is one of several surtaxes subject to a combined rate limitation. A county shall not levy this surtax and the Small County Surtax, Indigent Care and Trauma Center Surtax, and County Public Hospital Surtax in excess of a combined rate of 1 percent.

Counties Eligible to Levy

All counties are eligible to levy the surtax.

Distribution of Proceeds

The surtax proceeds shall be distributed to the county and its respective municipalities according to one of the following procedures.

1. An interlocal agreement between the county's governing body and the governing bodies of the municipalities representing a majority of the county's municipal population. This agreement may include a school district with the consent of all governing bodies previously mentioned.
2. If there is no interlocal agreement, then the distribution will be based on the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax formulas provided in s. 218.62, F.S.

Authorized Uses of Proceeds

A school district, county, or municipalities within the county, or municipalities within another county in the case of a negotiated joint county agreement, may use the surtax proceeds and any accrued interest only for the following purposes.

1. Finance, plan, and construct infrastructure.
2. Acquire land for public recreation or conservation or protection of natural resources.
3. Finance the closure of county or municipal-owned solid waste landfills that are already closed or are required to close by order of the DEP. Any use of such proceeds or interest for purposes of landfill closures prior to July 1, 1993, is ratified.

Neither the proceeds nor any accrued interest shall be used to fund the operational expenses of infrastructure, except that any county with a population of 75,000 or less that is required to close a landfill by order of the DEP may use the proceeds and accrued interest for long-term maintenance costs associated with landfill closures. Counties, as defined in s. 125.011(1), F.S., (i.e., Miami-Dade County) and charter counties may use the proceeds and accrued interest to retire or service indebtedness incurred for bonds issued prior to July 1, 1987, for infrastructure purposes, and for bonds subsequently issued to refund such bonds. Any use of such proceeds or interest for purposes of retiring or servicing indebtedness incurred for such refunded bonds prior to July 1, 1999, is ratified.

The term *infrastructure* is defined as any fixed capital expenditure or fixed capital outlay associated with the construction, reconstruction, or improvement of public facilities which have a life expectancy of five or more years and any related land acquisition, land improvement, design, and engineering costs. This definition also includes a fire department vehicle, emergency medical services vehicle, sheriff's office vehicle, police department vehicle, or any other vehicle, and such equipment necessary to outfit the vehicle for its official use or equipment that has a life expectancy of at least five years. Additionally, infrastructure means any expenditure for the construction, lease, or maintenance of, or provision of utilities or security for, those court facilities as defined in s.

29.008, F.S., as well as any fixed capital expenditure or fixed capital outlay associated with the improvement of private facilities that have a life expectancy of 5 or more years and that the owner agrees to make available for use on a temporary basis as needed by a local government as a public emergency shelter or staging area for emergency response equipment during an emergency officially declared by the state or by the local government under s. 252.38, F.S. Additionally, these “private facility” improvements are limited to those necessary to comply with current standards for public emergency evacuation shelters, and the private facility’s owner shall enter into a written contract with the local government providing the improvement funding to make such private facility available to the public for purposes of emergency shelter at no cost to the local government for a minimum period of 10 years after the completion of the improvement, with the provision that such obligation will transfer to any subsequent owner until the end of the minimum period.

An amount not to exceed 15 percent of the surtax proceeds may be allocated for the purpose of funding county economic development projects of a general public purpose targeted to improve local economies, including the funding of operational costs and incentives related to such economic development. The referendum ballot statement must indicate the intention to make such an allocation.

School districts, counties, and municipalities may pledge the surtax proceeds for the purpose of servicing new bonded indebtedness. Local governments may use the services of the Division of Bond Finance of the State Board of Administration to issue bonds, and counties and municipalities may join together for the issuance of bonds.

A county with a total population of 50,000 or less on April 1, 1992, or any county designated as an area of critical state concern that imposed the surtax before July 1, 1992, may use the proceeds and accrued interest of the surtax for any public purpose if the county satisfies the following criteria: 1) the debt service obligations for any year are met; 2) the county’s comprehensive plan has been determined to be in compliance with part II of ch. 163, F.S., and 3) the county has adopted an amendment to the surtax ordinance pursuant to the procedure provided in s. 125.66, F.S., authorizing additional uses of the proceeds and accrued interest. Those counties designated as an area of critical state concern that qualify to use the surtax for any public purpose may use only up to 10 percent of the surtax proceeds for any public purpose other than for authorized infrastructure purposes. A county that was designated as an area of critical state concern for at least 20 consecutive years prior to removal of the designation, and that qualified to use the surtax for any public purpose at the time of the designation’s removal, may continue to use up to 10 percent of the surtax proceeds for any public purpose other than for infrastructure purposes for 20 years following the designation’s removal. After the 20 year period expires, a county may continue to use up to 10 percent of the surtax proceeds for any public purpose other than for infrastructure if the county adopts an ordinance providing for such continued use of the surtax proceeds.

Likewise, a municipality located within such a county may not use the proceeds and accrued interest for any purpose other than an authorized infrastructure purpose unless the municipality’s

comprehensive plan has been determined to be in compliance with part II of ch. 163, F.S., and the municipality has adopted an amendment to its surtax ordinance or resolution pursuant to the procedure provided in s. 166.041, F.S., authorizing additional uses of the proceeds and accrued interest. Such municipality may expend the proceeds and accrued interest for any public purpose authorized in the amendment.

Despite any other use restrictions to the contrary, a county, having a population greater than 75,000 in which the taxable value of real property is less than 60 percent of the just value of real property for ad valorem tax purposes for the tax year in which the referendum is placed before voters, and the municipalities within such a county, may use the surtax proceeds and accrued interest for operation and maintenance of parks and recreation programs and facilities established with the proceeds throughout the duration of the levy or accrued interest earnings are available for such use, whichever period is longer.

Relevant Attorney General Opinions

Florida's Attorney General has issued a number of legal opinions relevant to this revenue source. The full texts of those opinions are available via the searchable on-line database of legal opinions.¹ In a recent search, the LCIR staff identified the following opinions pertaining to this revenue source.

<u>Opinion #</u>	<u>Subject</u>
88-59	Use of discretionary surtax for construction
90-96	Infrastructure surtax proceeds, payment of debt
92-08	Local government infrastructure surtax proceeds
92-81	Discretionary local option infrastructure sales surtax
93-92	Local government infrastructure surtax, purchase of vehicle
94-46	Vehicles purchased with proceeds of sales surtax
94-79	Uses of local government infrastructure surtax
95-71	Tourist development tax / infrastructure surtax
95-73	Counties, infrastructure surtax used to fund engineers
99-24	Capital improvements to property leased by county
2000-06	Expenditure of infrastructure surtax revenues
2001-45	Local government infrastructure surtax, health care
2003-17	Infrastructure surtax use to purchase computer system
2007-51	Municipalities, use of infrastructure surtax monies

Local government officials seeking more clarification should review the opinions in their entirety. The statutory language pertaining to this revenue source has been amended since its authorization. The reader should keep the date of the opinion in mind when reviewing its relevance to current law or any interpretations that have been articulated in Florida case law.

1. <http://myfloridalegal.com/ago.nsf/Opinions>

Ninth-Cent Fuel Tax

Sections 206.41(1)(d), 206.87(1)(b), and 336.021, Florida Statutes

Brief Overview

The Ninth-Cent Fuel Tax is a tax of 1 cent on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold within a county. The tax may be authorized by an ordinance adopted by an extraordinary vote of the governing body or voter approval in a countywide referendum. Generally, the proceeds may be used to fund transportation expenditures.

General Law Amendments

Legislation passed during the 2008 Regular Legislative Session did not affect provisions related to this revenue source.

Authorization to Levy

Pursuant to ss. 206.41(1)(d) and 206.87(1)(b), F.S., any county in the state may levy a 1 cent per gallon tax on motor and diesel fuels sold in the county by extraordinary vote of the membership of its governing body or voter approval in a county-wide referendum. Since January 1, 1994, this tax has been imposed on diesel fuel in every county as the result of statewide equalization.

All impositions of the tax shall be levied before July 1st to be effective January 1st of the following year. However, levies of the tax which were in effect on July 1, 2002, and which expire on August 31st of any year may be reimposed at the current authorized rate to be effective September 1st of the year of expiration. A decision to rescind the tax shall not take effect on any other date than December 31st and shall require a minimum of 60 days notice to the Department of Revenue of such decision.

Counties Eligible to Levy

All counties are eligible to levy this tax on motor fuel.

Distribution of Proceeds

The county's governing body may, by joint agreement with one or more of its respective municipalities, provide for the authorized transportation purposes and the distribution of the tax proceeds within both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. However, the county is not required to share the proceeds of the tax with municipalities. Even if the county does not levy the tax on motor fuel, it still receives proceeds from the levy on diesel fuel.

Authorized Uses of Proceeds

County and municipal governments may use the tax proceeds for transportation expenditures as defined in s. 336.025(7), F.S. Transportation expenditures are defined to include those expenditures by the local government from local or state-shared revenue sources, excluding expenditures of bond proceeds, for the following programs.

1. Public transportation operations and maintenance.
2. Roadway and right-of-way maintenance and equipment and structures used primarily for the storage and maintenance of such equipment.
3. Roadway and right-of-way drainage.
4. Street lighting.
5. Traffic signs, traffic engineering, signalization, and pavement markings.
6. Bridge maintenance and operation.
7. Debt service and current expenditures for transportation capital projects in the foregoing program areas, including construction or reconstruction of roads and sidewalks.

Counties are also authorized to expend the revenues received in conjunction with the state or federal government for joint transportation projects.

Relevant Attorney General Opinions

Florida's Attorney General has issued a number of legal opinions relevant to this revenue source. The full texts of those opinions are available via the searchable on-line database of legal opinions.¹ In a recent search, the LCIR staff identified the following opinions pertaining to this revenue source.

<u>Opinion #</u>	<u>Subject</u>
79-98	Cattle gaps, construction and maintenance
81-30	Refund provisions of F.S. 206
82-54	Use of motor fuel tax for road construction, bond issue
83-25	Eligibility for refunds on motor fuel taxes
85-104	Use of excess funds from gas tax trust fund
86-39	Authority to use funds for sports complex
90-79	Local option fuel tax funding transportation disadvantaged

Local government officials seeking more clarification should review the opinions in their entirety. The statutory language pertaining to this revenue source has been amended since its authorization. The reader should keep the date of the opinion in mind when reviewing its relevance to current law or any interpretations that have been articulated in Florida case law.

1. <http://myfloridalegal.com/ago.nsf/Opinions>

1 to 6 Cents Local Option Fuel Tax

Sections 206.41(1)(e), 206.87(1)(c), and 336.025, Florida Statutes

Brief Overview

Local governments are authorized to levy a tax of 1 to 6 cents on every net gallon of motor fuel sold in a county. As the result of statewide equalization, this tax is imposed on diesel fuel in each county at the maximum rate of 6 cents per gallon. The tax on motor fuel may be authorized by an ordinance adopted by a majority vote of the governing body or voter approval in a countywide referendum. Generally, the proceeds may be used to fund transportation expenditures.

General Law Amendments

Legislation passed during the 2008 Regular Legislative Session did not affect provisions related to this revenue source.

Authorization to Levy

The tax shall be levied using either of the following procedures.

1. This tax may be levied by an ordinance adopted by a majority vote of the county's governing body or upon approval by referendum. Such ordinance shall be adopted in accordance with the requirements imposed under one of the following circumstances whichever is applicable.
 - a. Prior to June 1st, the county may establish by interlocal agreement with one or more of the municipalities located within the county, representing a majority of the population of the incorporated area, a distribution formula for dividing the entire proceeds of this fuel tax among the county government and all eligible municipalities within the county. If no interlocal agreement exists, a new interlocal agreement may be established prior to June 1st. However, any interlocal agreement executed after the initial levy of the tax, extension of the tax, or change in the tax rate, shall under no circumstances materially or adversely affect the rights of holders of outstanding bonds, which are backed by these taxes. The amounts distributed to the county government and each municipality shall not be reduced below the amount necessary for the payment of principal and interest and reserves for principal and interest as required under the covenants of any bond resolution outstanding on the date of establishment of the new interlocal agreement.
 - b. If an interlocal agreement has not been executed, the county may, prior to June 10th, adopt a resolution of intent to levy this tax.

2. If no interlocal agreement or resolution is adopted pursuant to the procedures described above, then municipalities representing more than 50 percent of the county population may, prior to June 20th, adopt uniform resolutions approving the tax, establishing the duration of the levy and the rate, and setting the date for a county-wide referendum on whether or not to levy the tax. A referendum shall be held in accordance with the provisions of such resolution and applicable state law, provided that the county shall bear the costs of such referendum. The tax shall be levied and collected countywide on January 1st, following 30 days after voter approval.

All impositions and rate changes of this tax shall be levied before July 1st to be effective January 1st of the following year for a period not to exceed 30 years. However, levies of the tax that were in effect on July 1, 2002, and which expire on August 31st of any year may be reimposed at the current authorized rate to be effective September 1st of the year of expiration. Upon expiration, the tax may be re-levied provided that a redetermination of the method of distribution is made.

Counties Eligible to Levy

All counties are eligible to levy this tax on motor fuel. However, counties and municipalities must meet the same eligibility requirements as specified for the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Program and the County and Municipal Revenue Sharing Programs in order to receive proceeds from this tax. Any funds otherwise undistributed because of ineligibility shall be distributed to eligible governments within the county in the same proportion as other local option fuel tax monies. Since the tax is imposed on diesel fuel at the maximum rate of 6 cents in all counties as the result of statewide equalization, each county receives the tax revenues associated with that levy regardless of whether or not the county is levying the tax on motor fuel.

Distribution of Proceeds

The tax proceeds shall be distributed by the Department of Revenue (DOR) according to the distribution factors determined at the local level by interlocal agreement between the county and municipalities within the county's boundaries. If no interlocal agreement has been established, then the distribution shall be based on the transportation expenditures of each local government for the immediately preceding 5 fiscal years, as a proportion of the total of such expenditures for the county and all municipalities within the county. These proportions shall be recalculated every 10 years based on the transportation expenditures of the immediately preceding 5 years. This recalculation shall under no circumstances materially or adversely affect the rights of holders of bonds outstanding on July 1, 1986, which are backed by the proceeds. The amounts distributed to the county government and each municipality shall not be reduced below the amount necessary for the payment of principal and interest and reserves for principal and interest as required under the covenants of any bond resolution outstanding on the date of the recalculation.

If the interlocal agreement does not provide for automatic adjustments or periodic review of the distribution method by the local governmental entities, then the parties to the agreement shall review and hold public hearings on the terms of the agreement at least every two years. Additionally, any inland county with a population greater than 500,000 as of July 1, 1996, having an interlocal agreement with one or more of the incorporated areas within the county must utilize the population estimates of local government units as of April 1st of each year for dividing the proceeds. This provision applies only to Orange County.

Authorized Uses of Proceeds

County and municipal governments may use the tax proceeds for transportation expenditures as defined in s. 336.025(7), F.S. Transportation expenditures are defined to include those expenditures by the local government from local or state-shared revenue sources, excluding expenditures of bond proceeds, for the following programs.

1. Public transportation operations and maintenance.
2. Roadway and right-of-way maintenance and equipment and structures used primarily for the storage and maintenance of such equipment.
3. Roadway and right-of-way drainage.
4. Street lighting.
5. Traffic signs, traffic engineering, signalization, and pavement markings.
6. Bridge maintenance and operation.
7. Debt service and current expenditures for transportation capital projects in the foregoing program areas, including construction or reconstruction of roads and sidewalks.

Small counties, which are defined as having a total population of 50,000 or less on April 1, 1992, and municipalities within such counties are authorized to use the proceeds to fund infrastructure projects, if such projects are consistent with the local government's approved comprehensive plan. If the approval or denial of the plan has not become final, such projects should be consistent with the plan last submitted to the state land-planning agency. In addition, no more than an amount equal to the proceeds from 4 cents of this tax for the express purpose of paying for a court-ordered refund of special assessments.

Except as provided for in s. 336.025(7), F.S., such funds shall not be used for the operational expenses of any infrastructure. Such funds may be used for infrastructure projects only after the local government, prior to the fiscal year in which the funds are proposed to be used, or if pledged for bonded indebtedness, prior to the fiscal year in which the bonds will be issued, has held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed use of the funds and adopted a resolution certifying that the local government has met all of the transportation needs identified in its approved comprehensive plan. If the approval or denial of the plan has not become final, the resolution should certify that the local government has met all transportation needs consistent with the plan last submitted to the state

land-planning agency. Additionally, the proceeds shall not be pledged for bonded indebtedness for a period exceeding 10 years, with one exception. For the express purpose of using such proceeds in any fiscal year to pay a court-ordered refund of special assessments, the proceeds may be pledged for bonded indebtedness not exceeding 15 years. For these purposes, the term *infrastructure* has the same meaning as provided in s. 212.055, F.S.

Local governments may use the services of the Division of Bond Finance of the State Board of Administration to issue any bonds through these provisions and may pledge the revenues from these local option fuel taxes to secure the payment of bonds. Counties and municipalities may join together for the issuance of these bonds.

Relevant Attorney General Opinions

Florida's Attorney General has issued a number of legal opinions relevant to this revenue source. The full texts of those opinions are available via the searchable on-line database of legal opinions.¹ In a recent search, the LCIR staff identified the following opinions pertaining to this revenue source.

<u>Opinion #</u>	<u>Subject</u>
90-79	Local option tax funding transportation disadvantaged
92-20	Use of local option gas tax funds
93-12	Distribution of local option gas tax
94-20	Local option gas tax revenues
94-67	Referendum vote creating the City of Port LaBelle
99-70	Municipalities, dredging canals as part of road program
2000-37	Interest on municipal fuel tax fund, uses
2002-02	Local option fuel tax, used for bicycle paths

Local government officials seeking more clarification should review the opinions in their entirety. The statutory language pertaining to this revenue source has been amended since its authorization. The reader should keep the date of the opinion in mind when reviewing its relevance to current law or any interpretations that have been articulated in Florida case law.

1. <http://myfloridalegal.com/ago.nsf/Opinions>

1 to 5 Cents Local Option Fuel Tax

Sections 206.41(1)(e) and 336.025, Florida Statutes

Brief Overview

County governments are authorized to levy a tax of 1 to 5 cents upon every net gallon of motor fuel sold within a county. Diesel fuel is not subject to this tax. This tax shall be levied by an ordinance adopted by a majority plus one vote of the membership of the governing body or voter approval in a countywide referendum. The tax proceeds may be used for transportation expenditures needed to meet the requirements of the capital improvements element of an adopted local government comprehensive plan or for expenditures needed to meet the immediate local transportation problems and for other transportation-related expenditures that are critical for building comprehensive roadway networks by local governments.

General Law Amendments

Legislation passed during the 2008 Regular Legislative Session did not affect provisions related to this revenue source.

Authorization to Levy

The tax may be levied by an ordinance adopted by a majority plus one vote of the county's governing body or upon approval by referendum and is levied on motor fuel only. All impositions and rate changes of the tax shall be levied before July 1st, to be effective January 1st of the following year. However, levies of the tax which were in effect on July 1, 2002, and which expire on August 31st of any year may be reimposed at the current authorized rate to be effective September 1st of the year of expiration. A decision to rescind the tax shall not take effect on any other date than December 31st and shall require a minimum of 60 days notice to the Department of Revenue (DOR) of such decision.

The county may, prior to levy of the tax, establish by interlocal agreement with one or more of its respective municipalities representing a majority of the county's incorporated area population, a distribution formula for dividing the entire proceeds of this fuel tax among the county government and all eligible municipalities. If no interlocal agreement is adopted before the effective date of the tax, the tax revenues shall be distributed according to the transportation expenditures methodology described in detail in the section, Distribution of Proceeds, discussed below. If no interlocal agreement exists, a new agreement may be established prior to June 1st of any year. However, any interlocal agreement established after the initial levy of the tax or change in the tax rate shall under no circumstances materially or adversely affect the rights of holders of outstanding bonds, which are backed by these taxes, and the amounts distributed to each local government shall not be reduced below the amount necessary for the payment of principal and interest and reserves for principal and interest as required under the covenants of any bond resolution outstanding on the date of

establishment of the new interlocal agreement.

Counties Eligible to Levy

All counties are eligible to levy this tax. However, counties and municipalities must meet the same eligibility requirements as specified for the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Program and the County and Municipal Revenue Sharing Programs in order to receive proceeds from this tax. Any funds otherwise undistributed because of ineligibility shall be distributed to eligible governments within the county in same proportion as other local option fuel tax monies.

Distribution of Proceeds

The tax proceeds shall be distributed by the DOR according to the distribution factors determined at the local level by interlocal agreement between the county and municipalities within the county's boundaries. If the interlocal agreement does not provide for automatic adjustments or periodic review of the distribution method by the local government entities, then the parties to the agreement shall review and hold public hearings on the terms of the agreement at least every two years.

If no interlocal agreement is established, then the distribution shall be based on the transportation expenditures of each local government for the immediately preceding 5 fiscal years, as a proportion of the total of such expenditures for the county and all municipalities within the county. These proportions shall be recalculated every 10 years based on the transportation expenditures of the immediately preceding 5 years.

This recalculation shall under no circumstances materially or adversely affect the rights of holders of bonds outstanding on July 1, 1986, which are backed by the proceeds. The amounts distributed to the county government and each municipality shall not be reduced below the amount necessary for the payment of principal and interest and reserves for principal and interest as required under the covenants of any bond resolution outstanding on the date of the recalculation.

Authorized Uses of Proceeds

The tax proceeds shall be used for transportation expenditures needed to meet the requirements of the capital improvements element of an adopted comprehensive plan or for expenditures needed to meet the immediate local transportation problems and for other transportation-related expenditures that are critical for building comprehensive roadway networks by local governments. Expenditures for the construction of new roads, the reconstruction or resurfacing of existing paved roads, or the paving of existing graded roads shall be deemed to increase capacity and such projects shall be included in the capital improvements element of an adopted comprehensive plan. Routine maintenance of roads is not considered an authorized expenditure.

Local governments may use the services of the Division of Bond Finance of the State Board of Administration to issue any bonds through these provisions and may pledge the revenues from these local option fuel taxes to secure the payment of bonds. Counties and municipalities may join together for the issuance of these bonds.

Relevant Attorney General Opinions

Florida's Attorney General has issued several legal opinions relevant to this revenue source. The full texts of those opinions are available via the searchable on-line database of legal opinions.¹ In a recent search, the LCIR staff identified the following opinions pertaining to this revenue source.

<u>Opinion #</u>	<u>Subject</u>
94-20	Local option gas tax revenues
94-67	Referendum vote creating the City of Port LaBelle
97-25	County local option fuel tax funding transit operations
2002-02	Local option fuel tax, used for bicycle paths

Local government officials seeking more clarification should review the opinions in their entirety. The statutory language pertaining to this revenue source has been amended since its authorization. The reader should keep the date of the opinion in mind when reviewing its relevance to current law or any interpretations that have been articulated in Florida case law.

1. <http://myfloridalegal.com/ago.nsf/Opinions>