

Hillsborough
County
COUNTY ATTORNEY
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August 31, 2018

Janet Tashner, General Counsel
Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability
111 West Madison, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

RE: All for Transportation's Discretionary Sales Tax Surtax initiative

Dear Ms. Tashner,

I have been asked by Hillsborough County administration to ensure that there is good communication and documentation of the currently ongoing Performance Audit Process of the Hillsborough County Transportation Program. As you know, All for Transportation, the sponsors of the one (1) percent surtax initiative, made arrangements with OPPAGA to conduct a performance audit pursuant to Florida Section 212.055(10). Hillsborough County was not involved in any way with this citizen driven initiative to place a referendum on the ballot.

OPPAGA's selected contractor to perform the audit, McConnell & Jones, LLP, first notified County staff on _____, of the need for an audit and scheduled a meeting with County Administration on August 9, 2018. It was communicated to County representatives that a draft report would be submitted August 22, 2018. Management's comments would be due August 31, 2018, with a final report to be submitted after written final approval from the Legislature's Contract Manager. As you know, Section 212.055(10), FS, requires that the final audit be published on the County website at least 60 days before the referendum is held, i.e., 60 days before the November 6, 2018, general election.

On August 9, 2018, the staff initially expressed concerns about the decision to audit Hillsborough County's Transportation Program due to the fact that Hillsborough County has not had **any** involvement in this citizen driven initiative to implement a transportation surtax pursuant to Section 212.055(1). Hillsborough County Staff also did not understand how the review of Hillsborough County's past performance delivering transportation projects could inform the utilization of the one (1) percent tax if it passes under the system set out in the Ballot Petition for this tax. The Ballot Petition contemplates an oversight committee and a structure that has not yet been used to implement a transportation program. Finally, Hillsborough County staff and your staff discussed the fact that audit was limited to Hillsborough County and HART and did not include the three municipalities who will be receiving a significant portion of the proceeds.

Ms. Janet Tashner, General Counsel
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Unfortunately, the draft report was not received until August 30, 2018, one day before it was envisioned the County's comments to the draft would be provided. This presents obvious challenges to the County's ability to review the 168 page audit and provide meaningful comments timely. The deadline to provide management comments has been extended until noon, September 5, 2018. However, this remains somewhat prejudicial to Hillsborough County. County management is committed to putting forth every effort to meet this challenge and wanted these facts to be documented.

Thank you for your kind attention to these concerns. I will be available to discuss same should you wish.

Sincerely,

Christine M. Beck,
Hillsborough County Attorney

CMB/ilf