

# Governor Should Wield the Budget Ax on Bumper Crop of \$100 Million Turkeys

*State budget process needs revamping to boost public accountability and integrity*

The 1987-88 State budget will rise almost 12% to \$18.5 billion in 1987-88, due in large part to Florida's historic and largest ever tax increase - the new sales tax on many professional, business and personal services. Upcoming: A banner year for Florida government spending.

Much of the increased revenue was necessary to meet the legitimate and growing needs of the citizens of Florida by way of new schools, roads and prisons. However, as reported previously, sizeable new resources are slated to be spent on appropriations of dubious distinction.

With this in mind, Florida TaxWatch examined the new State budget to identify "turkeys", appropriations which siphon off public money needed for existing priorities, ill serving the interest of the general public. Unfortunately, we found a bumper turkey crop.

It is particularly troubling that many of the turkeys appropriated by the 1987 Legislature are virtually immune from the Governor's veto pen. A little more than 3/4 or \$51 million of the turkeys highlighted in this report are "protected" in lump sum appropriations. This is because these lump sum appropriations contain many otherwise worthwhile projects. In order to pluck a turkey, the Governor would have to veto the entire appropriation.

Tens of millions of dollars of this year's pork barrel is set to be funded by proceeds from the new sales tax on services, which is already going to cost each Florida family over \$160 next year, and over \$240 the following year.



### Turkeys ...

*...Crowd out government spending on citizens' legitimate needs;*

*...Undermine citizen confidence in the institution of government;*

*...Unnecessarily pump up demand for future spending on "pork barrel" projects.*

Moreover, some of the turkeys are recurring. So, what you see today may be just the tip of the iceberg of what you will see for some years to come. For example, planning money appropriated this year means construction funding next year - and in some cases succeeding years.

Other turkeys such as public subsidies for private local film festivals and trade expeditions benefiting particular areas pop up in the State budget year after year. And "statutory" turkeys including the anti-competitive fully reflectorized license plates and legislators' automatic pay raises enjoy a perpetual and rather disturbing life of their own.

## What is a Legislative Turkey?

A turkey is a legislative appropriation that is tacked onto the State budget during the legislative session, circumventing the legislatively established planning and budgeting process at taxpayers' expense.

In the past, these pork barrel projects were generally reserved for the legislative leadership and committee chairpersons. This is no longer the case. Many of the House and Senate's more than 70 subcommittee chairmen - plus rank and file legislators - received funding for their special projects during the 1987 General Session.

Turkeys fall under at least one of the following categories of expenditures:

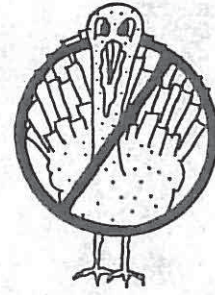
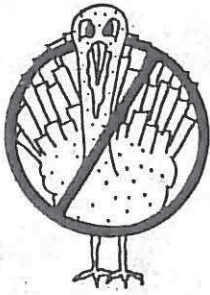
1. Items which are included in the budget after the Session begins, allowing legislators to sidestep the normal planning and budgeting process and public accountability;
2. Subsidies to private organizations, councils or committees which can and should get their funding from private sources;
3. Local government projects that benefit a local area but lack significant local funding support;
4. Low priority projects that get funded over higher priority items;
5. Projects that have no empirically demonstrated public benefit, mainly helping some special interest; and
6. Projects not subjected to the legislatively established planning and budgeting process that also meet one of the other five criteria.

Florida TaxWatch estimates that the total value of turkeys in the 1987-88 State budget exceeds \$100 million. The list of turkeys on the following pages highlights over \$65 million worth of these questionable expenditures.

## What Else Could a Turkey Buy?

Spending on turkeys by state government results in that much less money for legitimate public service needs. Florida TaxWatch has compiled a partial listing of valuable programs identified as priorities in the State's established planning and budgeting process - which were under funded or in certain circumstances not funded at all, in part because special interest projects or turkeys are budgeted.

	<u>Deficit</u>
Teachers' Career Ladder (Merit Program)	Up to \$90 million
Adult Congregate Living Facilities	\$4.5 million
Affordable Housing Projects	\$19.0 million
Child Care	\$7.0 million
Child Welfare	\$3.6 million
Pre-Kindergarten	\$3.4 million
Runaway and Homeless	\$2.2 million
Aid To Families with Dependent Children	\$6.3 million
Emergency Assistance for Homeless	\$4.0 million
Child Health Assurance Program	\$12.4 million
Homeless Initiative	\$3.5 million



# Appropriations of Dubious Distinction

## 1987 Turkey Watch - "Governor, Just Say No"



**Local Recreational Projects.** The Department of Natural Resources has an established program to aid local recreational development. Projects are competitively evaluated and state matching grants awarded to the most worthy applicants.

However, appropriation #1491A in the 1987-88 State budget bypasses the Department's process, funding numerous projects that require no local government matching funds and whose merit has not been competitively evaluated. Out of the 48 projects on next year's funding list, only two include local matching money.

Over the past three years, the number of projects and level of appropriations have almost tripled. Some of the more notable projects to be funded in 1987-88:

- Cincinnati Reds training center - \$500,000;
- Lipton International Tennis Center improvements - \$150,000;
- Flamingo Grove Aviary - \$220,000; and
- Melrose Women's Club and Melrose Homemakers' Club Renovations - \$5000.

One would think the bag limit was exceeded on this "take". Unfortunately, there is no set limit - except the taxpayers' tolerance.

\$11.6 million



**Five Will Getcha Ten.** Brevard Community College will get double its requested appropriation for a fourth branch campus in Palm Bay. This despite the fact that the project was considered a very low priority by the State Board of Community Colleges.

\$10 million



**Aviation Matching Grants.** The Florida Department Of Transportation has a local government aviation assistance program that attracts federal matching dollars for approved projects. Of the \$43.4 million in next year's State budget, only about half is assured a federal matching allocation.

Six of the larger projects did not go through the Department's planning and budgeting process - and will not be eligible for the Federal grants. They include:

- Melbourne Terminal Construction - \$4.5 million;
- St. Lucie County Airport - \$5 million; and
- Lakeland Airport - \$1.2 million.

\$12.1 million



**Turkey Landing In Gadsden County.**

Aspalaga boat landing on the Apalachicola River is set to get a face-lift, courtesy of General Revenue dollars. It remains a mystery why the project will not be funded from the user-based Motor Boat Revolving Trust Fund.

\$ .14 million



**Department of State Turkey Stockpile.**

The Department has an established program to acquire and restore historic properties around the State. Project proposals are submitted and prioritized on a legislative request list.

However, over half of the \$9.3 million worth of projects funded in appropriation #1601A for 1987-88 were not on the Department's list. Some of the "bagged game" coming home include:

- \$775,000 for minaret restoration of a city owned building at the (private) University of Tampa;
- \$155,000 for restoration of the Masonic Temple in Gadsden County; and
- \$300,000 for the Artime Center in Miami.

\$4.9 million



**More In Department Of State.** A program to develop and operate art facilities is plagued by a similar infusion of legislative pork. Although most of the 61 projects in this \$ 12.1 million lump sum appropriation seem legitimate, some made the funding list as favors to individual legislators. They include:

- \$ 100,000 for Tiffany glass collection purchase/restoration;
- \$ 250,000 for the Greater Miami Opera; and,
- \$ 100,000 for the Town Of Eatonville's Centennial Celebration.

\$4.2 million



**Zellwood Drainage District, Please Call Home.**

\$100,000 was appropriated for the Zellwood Drainage District to purchase weed eating carp fish. Florida TaxWatch has spoken to many officials at the Department of Environmental Regulation, the South Florida Water Management District and even the office of the Senator who sponsored the appropriation. No one knows the whereabouts of the Zellwood Drainage District.

\$ .1 million



**Passing Up Federal \$\$\$.**

The Department of Natural Resources has an established beach restoration/erosion control program that attracts Federal matching dollars for approved projects. Two projects that did not go through the approval process are for Manatee County and Deerfield Beach. The State will unnecessarily pay the full cost of these projects if they are not vetoed.

\$ .24 million

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*"Public money ought to be touched with the most scrupulous conscientiousness of honor. It is not the produce of riches only, but of the hard earnings of labor and poverty."*

Thomas Paine

*"Nothing is easier than spending public money. It does not appear to belong to anybody; the temptation is overwhelming to bestow it on somebody."*

Calvin Coolidge

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**To Your Health.** The planned construction of a public health academic building at the University of South Florida has been pushed up 5 years by the Legislature. This low priority project will cost \$9.7 million. Look for a large portion of the funding to be requested next year if it gets by the veto pen.

\$ .65 million



**University of Florida Police Station.** Here is a project that refuses to go away despite the fact that it was vetoed the last couple of years and is not on the Board of Regents' current priority list. This year's appropriation goes toward planning the estimated \$1.4 million project.

\$ .1 million



**Gainesville To Hawthorne Bike Path.** The Department of Natural Resources has an established program to acquire and convert railroad rights-of-way to recreational uses. This project was not subjected to that process and was not requested by the Department.

\$ .18 million



**Brevard County Drug Task Force.** This appropriation was not requested by the Department of Law Enforcement, but rather was "slipped in downtown" during the 1987 Session.

\$ .1 million



**Low Priority Gets \$\$\$.** A South Volusia branch of Daytona Beach Community College will be funded this year, although the State Board of Community Colleges rates it a low priority. A veto would put this project in its proper place.

\$1.5 million



**Turkey On The Wing.** A legislative appropriation will build a road to an industrial park with no tenants, located at an airport with little air traffic! County owned Valkaria Airport in Brevard could not find the money locally, so the State was asked to help boost this development. However, the road building project was not recommended by either the Department of Transportation or Commerce.

\$ .5 million



**Turkey In Track Shoes.** The University Of Central Florida is set to receive initial funding for a "world class track" to help lure the Pan American Games to Orlando. This project is nowhere to be found in the State University System's Five Year Capital Improvements Plan. Total cost is projected to be over \$10 million. Will next year's \$500,000 planning appropriation obligate the State for the balance of this non-priority project? To answer no, we need a veto!

\$ .5 million



**One For University Of West Florida.** This appropriation to continue construction on an athletic complex did not travel the normal planning and budgeting route.

\$ .45 million



**Reel Wet Project.** An appropriation passed in the waning hours of the 1987 Session is for an "underwater environmental film." Florida TaxWatch has been unable to obtain additional information on this appropriation. What the money will buy and how it will benefit the State are questions that may have to be answered by the sponsoring phantom legislator.

\$ .23 million



**Mystery Land Use Institute.** \$150,000 was appropriated for an Institute for Land Use Planning at the University of West Florida.

The Department of Community Affairs, which received the unsolicited funding, is unfamiliar with the Institute. University officials could add nothing further, describing the institute as "something generated from inside the Legislature."

\$1.15 million



**But Why?** The Appropriations Act calls for the acquisition of "Emerson Point-Manatee County." But no one seems to know why.

This project was not subjected to an established Department of Natural Resources prioritization process for land acquisition.

\$1 million



**International Affairs Council of Greater Orlando.** This appropriation was recognized last year as a "turkey" by Florida

TaxWatch. Nonetheless, it has been increased by 50% in the new State budget. Although private sector funds contribute substantially to this project, our position remains that a fast growing city like Orlando can and should be able to fund it without state assistance.

\$1.15 million

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*"We're going to blast every legislative turkey that didn't go through the process, right out of the budget."*

*Jim Smith  
Governor's Chief of Staff*

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**Trade Missions for Hialeah Chamber of Commerce.** As is the case with the Orlando Chamber of Commerce, this appropriation is to promote trade. We believe it is inappropriate for the State to pay the entire cost of this initiative.

\$.03 million



**DER Grab Bag.** \$2.68 million was appropriated to the Department of Environmental Regulation for seven local sewage treatment and water system projects that the Department did not request. Almost all of these projects required little or no local effort. No process currently exists for the DER to competitively evaluate and rank these projects before the Legislature appropriates funding.

\$2.68 million



**HRS Centers.** \$1.6 million was appropriated to HRS' Aging and Adult Services Office for six senior citizen centers to provide daily recreation and meals. HRS did not ask for these facilities nor did they go through the prioritized budgeting process for an evaluation of competing needs.

\$1.6 million



**American International Exhibition.** Cited as a turkey last year, this appropriation has been increased 100% for 1987-88. It is to be used to promote international tourism in Miami. While the concept is laudable, state policy dictates that this type of program should be handled by those firms directly involved/benefited - unless the appropriate state agency requests it.

\$.2 million



**Tampa Trade Fair.** Florida TaxWatch identified this item as a turkey last year.

This year's appropriation has been increased by 60%. Although there are very obvious merits to this kind of event, funding for it has not been requested by the Department of Commerce. This is clearly a local event that should be funded by local or private sources.

\$ .2 million



**Tournament of the Americas.** The City of Miami is hosting a bowling tournament which brings some of the top Latin American bowlers to Miami to compete. This local event will primarily benefit Miami and should therefore be funded from local and/or private sources.

\$ .02 million



**Trade Exposition Center.** This is an appropriation to support Latin American trade missions to and from Miami. While meritorious in its basic intent, the center's activities should be funded by local or private resources.

\$ .2 million



**Velodrome/Brian Piccolo Park.** This funding is to study the feasibility of building a world class cycling facility in this Broward County park. Local projects of local benefit should be funded locally.

\$ .5 million



**Cubans in Exile.** \$100,000 was appropriated to the Department of Community Affairs for rebuilding the Community Center for Municipalities of Cuba in Exile. The Department did not request the appropriation and is not familiar with the project.

\$ .1 million

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*"You judge something based on your point of view. When I look at something in another part of the state I might be critical of it. When I look at something in my area, I think it's very important."*

*Sam Bell, Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations*

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**Nursery Plant Sales Abroad.** The purpose of this appropriation is to assist the ornamental horticulture industry in its expansion to overseas markets. For each of the past three years, the State has appropriated almost \$250,000 to the Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association and the American Horticultural Marketing Council. It is time for the industry to rely on increased revenues from the expanded market base to finance future promotional activities.

\$ .2 million



**Miami Film Festival.** The film industry is becoming an integral part of some local economies. Events such as this should more appropriately be funded by local revenues or private sources.

\$ .1 million

**Ft. Lauderdale Film Festival.** Ditto above.

\$ .1 million



**Orange Blossom Classic.** This item was cited as a turkey last year. This year, the appropriation has been increased by 125%. It is used by the City of Miami to promote the football game.

Our position remains that it is inappropriate for the State to fund such events when admission is charged just as in any other collegiate level football game.

\$ .23 million



**National Orchid Show in Orlando.** While protecting and promoting Orchid propagation is meritorious, this appropriation was not subjected to the Department of Agriculture's planning and budgeting process.

\$ .03 million



**Turkeys in the Road.** The Legislature approved three local road projects that local Metropolitan Planning Organizations did not judge to be top priorities and were not recommended by the Department of Transportation.

- Four-Laning Capital Circle Southwest in Tallahassee - \$3.0 million;
- Four-Laning State Road 10 in Pensacola - \$1.0 million ; and
- Four-Laning Pine Forrest Road in Pensacola - \$.35 million; and
- Four-Laning Feasibility Study in Seminole County for State Road 434/419 - \$1.1 million.

\$5.5 million

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*"A turkey is an unnecessary, costly, special interest project...in someone else's district."*

*Anonymous Legislator*

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**Local Pork Barrel.** The following appropriations were not requested by the Department of Agriculture:

- Okaloosa County Fair Association - \$75,000
- Walton County Fair Association - \$50,000
- Nassau County multi-purpose agricultural building - \$50,000

\$ .18 million



**Tamiami Park Improvements.** The State is footing roughly 35% of the cost of electrical and landscaping improvements for this park. The Dade County Youth Fair, the Miami Indy and various other local events are held here.

Local and private sources of funding should be responsible for paying for these improvements rather than tapping State resources.

\$ .18 million



**Pensacola Homeport.** \$5 million was appropriated for the Pensacola Port Dredging project. In fact, the State apparently has agreed to fund the entire \$12 million cost of the project over the next four years. Local effort: The City of Pensacola and surrounding communities will spend just \$1.2 million on a beach nourishment project resulting from the dredging.

\$5 million



**Bio Environmental Lab.** \$250,000 was appropriated for planning a bio environmental laboratory to measure and analyze hazardous waste in the Jacksonville area. The City of Jacksonville has put up \$80,000 worth of planning money. Next year, it may ask the State to fund 50% of the \$3 to 5 million structure.

\$ .25 million



**Nova University Accelerated Liberal Arts Program.** Privately owned Nova University is set to receive \$980,000 for an accelerated liberal arts program that has no demonstrated need in the community. The Post Secondary Education Planning Commission recommended that the program be evaluated for possible consideration by the 1988 legislature because there was not sufficient opportunity this year to determine its necessity or impact. PEPC - which is responsible for evaluating and planning for statewide college level education needs - was ignored in the decision to fund the Nova program.

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## Statutory Turkeys



**Legislators' Automatic Annual Pay Raise Provision.** This is not an act of the 1987 Legislature, but it certainly meets the criteria of sidestepping public accountability - and will continue year after year until repealed. Florida lawmakers are the only people we know of who have a guaranteed raise every year, and they can set their own rate!

The 1987 Legislature rejected legislation by Senator Mattox Hair to remedy this obvious conflict of interest.



**License plate full reflectorization.** The Legislature again failed to delete the requirement for "fully" reflectorized state license tags from Chapter 320, F.S. Despite the absence of any empirical evidence to show the public's health, safety and welfare is enhanced by the requirement, current law restricts competition - resulting in Florida spending \$2 million a year more than necessary.

\$2.0 million



**Florida Wing of the Civil Air Patrol.** Chapter 252.55, F.S., requires an annual appropriation of \$50,000 to the CAP for maintenance, replacement and general administrative expenses - even though the CAP is housed in a federal government installation.

This item has been characterized as a "perennial turkey", but once again it managed to slip through the legislative process, notwithstanding a recommendation by the Governor's Office that it not be included in the 1987-88 State budget.

\$.05 million



**The New \$3 Million Senator District Expense Account?** The 1987-88 budget provides a \$250 a month (which due to a typo was listed in the final budget as \$250,000 a month) in extra intradistrict expense to any Senator with three district staff. Although it is possible that some Senators could justify \$3,000 more in yearly expenses, the citizens of Florida will never know without documentation. Another increase - coming so soon after yearly expenses were increased from \$12,000 to \$18,000 without accounting for it - is indefensible.





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