

Poaching Parking Revenue

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<http://www.flanews.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMvHFvGBdpI> (VIDEO)

High prices and more efficient cars have left the state Department of Transportation with less money to build roads. Legislation awaiting the Governor's signature could be the first step toward cities being forced to share parking meter revenue with the state.

Nearly every city in Florida has a major city running right through it. In most, parking meters line the main drag. Legislation passed but not yet signed, orders cities to report their parking meter revenue from meters on state roads by August 31st. We talked with Transportation Commission Chairman Ron Howse by phone.

We asked if it was about fairness, or making money.

"I think it's more of a fairness issue," said Howse. "When a local government demands we increase their parking and then they charge on it, there needs to be some fairness of equity brought back to the department."

This spring marks the third year in a row the state has made a grab for the meter money. The Florida League of Cities says revenues and policies vary from city to city.

"It's all across the map," said Ryan Padgett of the Florida League of Cities, "but we do have some that they make very little apparently. They basically cover the cost of the parking meters and the enforcement, that's about it."

Cities that don't report their earnings by August could be ordered to take their meters out. But just calculating income by individual meters or roads has its problems.

The same person who collects money from these meters on a state road also collects from all the meters around the corner, which isn't a state road.

Which means money from one street can't be kept with money from the other. Once the cities report their cash from the meters, state lawmakers will have the final say on if they have to share.

The state right of way extends from sidewalk to sidewalk, so any meters, and parking spaces are technically on state controlled land.