

Transportation & Economic Development Budget Subcommittee

Wednesday, March 19, 2025
10:30am
Mashburn Hall (314 HOB)

Daniel Perez
Speaker

Jason Shoaf
Chair

Committee Meeting Notice

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Transportation & Economic Development Budget Subcommittee

Start Date and Time: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 10:30 AM

End Date and Time: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 12:30 PM

Location: Mashburn Hall (314 HOB)

Duration: 2.00 hrs

Consideration of the following bill(s):

HB 313 Toll Exemptions for Purple Heart Medal Recipients by Fabricio
HB 793 Aerospace Innovation Funding by Kendall

NOTICE FINALIZED on 03/17/2025 4:35PM by SKB

HB 313

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 313	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 574 (Collins)
TITLE: Toll Exemptions for Purple Heart Medal Recipients	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Fabricio	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Transportation & Economic Development Budget ➤ Economic Infrastructure ➤ Budget

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill exempts individuals driving a motor vehicle with a Purple Heart license plate from the payment of tolls.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill is estimated to have a recurring negative impact of $500,000 to the State Transportation Trust Fund and Florida Turnpike trust funds. The bill is also estimated to have a $300,000 recurring negative impact to various local trust funds.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill revises the eligibility for toll exemptions by providing that individuals driving a motor vehicle with a Purple Heart specialty license plate, or a motorcycle with a Purple Heart special motorcycle license plate, are exempt from the payment of tolls on toll facilities. (Section 1).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025. (Section 2).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) met on February 14, 2025, and estimated that the bill will have a recurring negative impact of $500,000 to the State Transportation Trust Fund and Florida Turnpike trust funds.[1]

The REC included in their analysis that the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Florida Summary shows that veterans (and thus Purple Heart tags) are more represented in north Florida, where there are fewer toll facilities than south and central Florida. The bill could potentially encourage more individuals to get Purple Heart tags. The impacted population group is more likely to be older, retired, or disabled, thus less likely to be driving.[2]

[1] Office of Economic & Demographic Research, *Revenue Estimating Conference*, (February 14, 2025), https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/revenueimpact/index.cfm (last visited March 14, 2025).
[2] Office of Economic & Demographic Research, *Revenue Estimating Conference*, (February 14, 2025), https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/revenueimpact/index.cfm (last visited March 14, 2025).

The Department of Transportation reports that there will be necessary system modifications and an indeterminate fiscal impact associated with operations, maintenance, management and billings against eligible accounts. There could also be upfront expenditures for providing transponders to recipients at no cost though this is not required under the bill.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:
The REC estimates that the bill will have a recurring negative impact of $300,000 to various local trust funds from exempting customers with Purple Heart Plates from paying tolls.[3]

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Toll Facilities
The Florida Turnpike Mainline runs 312 miles through 11 counties in the state's peninsula, and the Turnpike Extension is 47 miles long. Florida's Turnpike System includes those two roadways along with the Sawgrass Expressway, the Seminole Expressway, the Beachline Expressway, the Southern Connector Extension of the Central Florida GreeneWay, the Veterans Expressway, the Suncoast Parkway, the Polk Parkway, the Western Beltway, the I-4 Connector and the First Coast Expressway. Highway infrastructure requires routine maintenance, updating and sometimes replacement. Tolls enable projects to be planned and built years before enough tax dollars could be collected to keep up with demand. All revenue from Florida's Turnpike System is reinvested into projects like building new highways or making improvements to existing highways on a statewide basis. Customers who use Florida's Turnpike System are charged based on the numbers of axles on the vehicles they drive and the distances they travel. The tolls collected generate the revenue to build, operate and maintain the roadways.[4]

In 2024, Florida's turnpike system generated $1.29 billion in toll revenues.[5]

Toll Payment Exemptions
Currently, s. 338.155, F.S., provides the following exemptions from paying a toll while using a toll facility:

- Employees of the agency operating the toll facility when using the facility on official state business;
- State military personnel while on official military business;
- A person with a disability who has a valid driver license, who operates a vehicle specially equipped for use by persons with disabilities, and who is certified by a physician as being severely physically disabled and having permanent upper limb mobility or dexterity impairments that substantially impair the person's ability to deposit coins in toll baskets;
- A person exempt from toll payment by the authorizing resolution for the bonds used to finance the facility;
- A person using the facility as a temporary detour route;
- Any law enforcement officer operating an official vehicle while on official law enforcement business;
- A person operating a fire vehicle while on official business or a rescue vehicle while on official business;
- A person participating in the funeral procession of a law enforcement officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty; and
- If tolls have been suspended due to an emergency evacuation.

Purple Heart

[3] Office of Economic & Demographic Research, *Revenue Estimating Conference*, (February 14, 2025), https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/revenueimpact/index.cfm (last visited March 14, 2025).
[4] Florida's Turnpike, *Frequently Asked Questions*, (2020), https://floridasturnpike.com/about/frequently-asked-questions/#1552928026401-9ecfee9c-7932 (last visited March 14, 2025).
[5] Florida's Turnpike, *Florida's Turnpike System FY 2025 and FY 2024 Transactions and Revenue*, (2025), Fhttps://floridasturnpike.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/FY24-Turnpike-System_Jul-May_TR.pdfY24-Turnpike-System_Jul-May_TR.pdf (last visited March 14, 2025).

The Purple Heart is one of the most recognized and respected medals that can be awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces. It is a distinguished military decoration, awarded in the name of the President, to those eligible service members who have suffered a wound as a result of enemy action.[6]

Specialty License Plates

Florida offers over 100 different specialty license plates for various organizations in support of the causes they represent. The money raised from the sale of these license plates goes directly to the organization. Since the inception of specialty license plates, millions of dollars have been raised for the organizations.[7]

The Purple Heart specialty license plate falls within the Special Military Services category.[8] To be eligible for a specialty military plate, an individual can apply with the following documentation: a completed Application for Military Service Related License Plates (Form HSMV 83034) or Application for U.S. Reserve or Florida National Guard License Plate (Form HSMV 83030). Further proof of eligibility must also be provided, pursuant to s. 320.089, F.S., and individuals must pay the standard vehicle registration and license plate fee.[9]

Section 320.089, F.S., provides that revenues from the sale of the plate are deposited into the Operations and Maintenance Trust Fund within the Department of Veterans' Affairs and used to support program operations that benefit veterans or the operation, maintenance, or construction of domiciliary and nursing homes for veterans.

There were 9,457 Purple Heart specialty plate registrations in 2024, and 10,026 in 2023.[10]

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Transportation & Economic Development Budget Subcommittee			Davis	Andeara
Economic Infrastructure Subcommittee				
Budget Committee				

[6] Wounded Warrior Marines, *Purple Heart,* WWR Fact Sheet (December 11, 2017), https://www.woundedwarrior.marines.mil/Portals/213/Docs/WWR%20Fact%20Sheets/Purple%20Heart%20Fact%20Sheet%20(Benefit)%20-%20Released%2012112017.pdf?ver=2017-12-12-110210-387 (last visited March 14, 2025).
[7] Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, *Personalized and Specialty License Plates*, (2025), https://www.flhsmv.gov/motor-vehicles-tags-titles/personalized-specialty-license-plates/ (last visited March 14, 2025).
[8] Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, *Florida License Plates,* (February 2025), https://www.flhsmv.gov/pdf/specialtyplates/tagbrochure.pdf (last visited March 14, 2025).
[9] Florida Department of Motor Vehicles, *Special License Plates in Florida*, (2025), https://www.dmv.org/fl-florida/special-license-plates.php (last visited March 14, 2025).
[10] Florida Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, *Florida Military License Plates*, (January 2025), https://www.flhsmv.gov/pdf/specialtyplates/military_brochure.pdf (last visited March 14, 2025).

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to toll exemptions for Purple Heart medal recipients; amending s. 338.155, F.S.; revising eligibility for toll exemptions to include operators displaying a Purple Heart specialty license plate or a Purple Heart special motorcycle license plate; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 338.155, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

338.155 Payment of toll on toll facilities required; exemptions.—

(1)(a) A person may not use a toll facility without payment of tolls, except:

1. An employee of the agency operating the toll project when using the toll facility on official state business.

2. State military personnel while on official military business.

3. A person with a disability as provided in subsection (3).

4. A person exempt from toll payment by the authorizing resolution for bonds issued to finance the facility.

5. A person exempt on a temporary basis where use of such

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toll facility is required as a detour route.

6. A law enforcement officer operating an official vehicle while on official law enforcement business.

7. A person operating a fire vehicle while on official business or a rescue vehicle while on official business.

8. A person participating in the funeral procession of a law enforcement officer or firefighter killed in the line of duty.

9. A person operating a motor vehicle displaying a Purple Heart specialty license plate or a motorcycle displaying a Purple Heart special motorcycle license plate.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

HB 793

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 793	**COMPANION BILL:** SB 1516 (Wright)
TITLE: Aerospace Innovation Funding	**LINKED BILLS:** None
SPONSOR(S): Kendall	**RELATED BILLS:** None

Committee References

Transportation & Economic Development Budget ➤ Housing, Agriculture & Tourism ➤ Budget

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill creates the International Aerospace Innovation Fund (IAIF), administered by Space Florida, to provide a framework to accelerate global aerospace innovation by funding collaborative research and development projects, workforce development initiatives, and commercialization efforts.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill provides no specific appropriations and has no fiscal impact on the state.

JUMP TO SUMMARY ANALYSIS RELEVANT INFORMATION BILL HISTORY

ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill establishes the International Aerospace Innovation Fund (IAIF), administered by Space Florida. The IAIF is established to accelerate global aerospace innovation by funding collaborative research and development projects, workforce development initiatives, and commercialization efforts.

The bill directs the IAIF to:

- Develop partnerships between Florida-based aerospace companies and international aerospace companies.
- Drive innovation in critical technology areas, such as space exploration, advanced manufacturing, and space infrastructure.
- Attract global investment in Florida's aerospace ecosystem.

The bill requires Space Florida to secure funding for the IAIF, received from:

- The state, in the form of direct appropriations to Space Florida for purposes of the IAIF, investment by the Florida Opportunity Fund, and any other investment, loan, or grant funds for which projects of the IAIF qualify.
- Private sector investments. Space Florida may solicit matching funds from and partner with private aerospace companies and venture capital funds.
- International contributions. To the extent permitted under state law, Space Florida may collaborate with foreign space agencies or innovation authorities to co-fund IAIF projects.

The bill requires Space Florida to develop eligibility criteria for projects that may be funded by the IAIF, including:

- The project must involve at least one aerospace company or organization that is based in Florida.

- The project must be a partnership that involves at least one of the following:
    - An international aerospace company;
    - A university; or
    - A space agency.

The bill specifies that the project must be intended, and have demonstrated potential, for commercialization. Funding must be competitively awarded to eligible projects based on merit. Space Florida must establish a panel of international aerospace experts to evaluate and recommend projects. An application process must be established by Space Florida for projects seeking funding by the IAIF.

The bill provides that Space Florida must identify and establish partnerships, to the extent possible, with countries that have robust aerospace sectors. Space Florida may negotiate and enter into bilateral agreements for the establishment of co-funding commitments, intellectual property rights, and collaboration terms. (Section 3).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025. (Section 4).

FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:

STATE GOVERNMENT:

The bill provides no specific appropriations and has no fiscal impact on the state. The creation of the fund would enhance the ability of Space Florida to work with the private sector and solicit private sector investments, venture capital funds, international contributions, grants, or other investments to support business development and commercialization of IAIF projects. Space Florida maintains existing resources which can also be utilized in conjunction with private investment to foster global partnerships.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

None.

PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill may have a positive impact on the aerospace industry in Florida, as a result of private sector investment and international contributions in the IAIF.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Space Florida
The Legislature passed the Space Florida Act in 2006,[1] which consolidated Florida's three existing space entities, Florida Space Authority, Florida Space Research Institute, and Florida Aerospace Finance Corporation, into a single entity called Space Florida.[2] Space Florida is established as an independent special district, a body politic and corporate, and a subdivision of the state. Space Florida is subject to the provisions of the Uniform Special District Accountability Act, which governs issues like operations, financial reporting, taxation, assessments, elections, compliance with general law, and comprehensive planning.

The Space Florida Board of Directors is comprised of 10 members, including experts in airport authority and aircrafts, the Secretary of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation. These members are appointed by the Governor, President of the Senate, and

[1] Chapter 2006-60, Laws of Fla.
[2] *See* ss. 331.301 *through* 331.371, F.S.

Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Governor or Governor's designee also serves on the Board as a voting member.[3]

Space Florida's objectives include supporting the growth and development of a sustainable aerospace industry in Florida. Space Florida acts as Florida's point of contact for state aerospace-related activities with federal agencies, the military, state agencies, businesses, and the private sector.[4] Space Florida is authorized to purchase or construct facilities, set rates, fees, and charges for the use of facilities, and undertake joint financing with municipalities or private sector entities for any project.[5]

According to Space Florida's 2024 Annual Operations Report, as of June 30, 2024, Space Florida had 161 total projects in development with an estimated value of $5.6 billion in capital investment. This estimated value has almost doubled since 2021.[6]

Powers of Space Florida

Space Florida is given certain powers, including, but not limited to:[7]

- Using a corporate seal;
- Using patents, copyrights, and trademarks;
- Lending and investing money;
- Acquiring certain properties;
- Executing contracts;
- Issuing revenue bonds;
- Making expenditures for entertainment and travel expenses and business clients, guests, and other authorized persons; and
- Fixing and collecting fees, loan payments, rental payments, and other charges in connection with financing agreements.

Duties of Space Florida

To implement the Space Florida Act and carry out spaceport operations, Space Florida is given certain duties, including, but not limited to, creating a business plan, entering into agreements and cooperating with other state agencies, and consulting with appropriate federal agencies.[8]

Specifically, Space Florida is required to:

- Enter into agreements with the Department of Education, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Commerce, and CareerSource Florida.[9]
- In cooperation with the Department of Commerce, collaborate to develop a plan to retain, expand, attract, and create aerospace industry entities, public or private, which results in the creation of high-value-added businesses and jobs in Florida.[10]
- Develop, in cooperation with the Department of Commerce, a plan to provide financing assistance to aerospace businesses.[11]
- Carry out its responsibilities for spaceport operations by:[12]
    - Seeking federal support and developing partnerships to renew and upgrade the infrastructure and technologies at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, the John F. Kennedy Space Center, and the Eastern Range.

[3] Space Florida, *Board of Directors*, (2024), https://www.spaceflorida.gov/board-of-directors (last visited March 14, 2025).
[4] Section 331.3011, F.S.
[5] Section 331.305, F.S.
[6] Space Florida, *Annual Report Trajectories*, (2024), https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66c8a3fe36eef11411f2b1ef/674749d0769077b041d100ff_Annual-Report-2024-Final_compressed.pdf (last visited March 14, 2025).
[7] Section 331.305, F.S.
[8] Section 331.3051, F.S.
[9] Section 331.3051(2), F.S.
[10] Section 331.3051(3), F.S.
[11] Section 331.3051(6), F.S.
[12] Section 331.3051(7), F.S.

- Supporting federal efforts to clarify roles and responsibilities of federal agencies in an effort to streamline access for commercial launch users.
- Pursuing the development of commercial spaceports in the state in partnership with counties or municipalities, the Federal Government, or private entities.
- Promoting and facilitating launch activity within the state by supporting and assisting commercial launch operators' interactions with federal agencies for launching from Florida.
- Consulting, as necessary, with the appropriate federal, state, and local authorities, including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, DOT, Florida National Guard, and industry on establishing and operating spaceport infrastructure and facilities in the state.

Space Florida Funding

Space Florida maintains a recurring budget of $17.5 million, averaging total appropriations of $21.0 million annually. This includes an average of $6.0 million dedicated to financing business development and fostering partnerships and collaboration in the Florida aerospace industry.

Space Florida Appropriations			
	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Operations	12,500,000	12,500,000	17,500,000
Business Development	6,000,000	8,500,000	6,000,000
Total	$ 18,500,000	$ 21,000,000	$ 23,500,000

Space Florida states that expanding investment opportunities to include foreign entities would tap into the global aerospace market, potentially enhancing Florida's return on investment.[13] Since its inception in 2013, Space Florida has received $1.0 million in annual recurring funds to support the Space Florida-Israel Innovation Partnership. Together with its capital accelerator programs, these initiatives have generated over $800 million in capital to the state's aerospace sector.[14] The Space Florida-Israel Innovation Partnership has facilitated over $22 million in joint research and development funding, strengthening economic and strategic ties between Florida and Israeli aerospace companies. This collaboration supports the development of aerospace technologies with significant potential across industries such as defense, transportation, and infrastructure, helping both Florida and Israel maintain leadership in aerospace innovation among growing global competition.[15][16]

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Transportation & Economic Development Budget Subcommittee			Davis	Andeara
Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee				
Budget Committee				

[13] Email from Lindsay Pierce, Director of Government Relations & External Affairs, Space Florida, RE: HB 793, (March 5, 2025).
[14] Email from Lindsay Pierce, Director of Government Relations & External Affairs, Space Florida, RE: HB 793, (March 5, 2025).
[15] Space Florida, *Israel Innovation Authority Partnership*,
[16] Space Florida, *Annual Report Trajectories*, (2024), https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/66c8a3fe36eef11411f2b1ef/674749d0769077b041d100ff_Annual-Report-2024-Final_compressed.pdf (last visited March 14, 2025).

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to aerospace innovation funding; amending s. 331.3051, F.S.; requiring Space Florida to administer the International Aerospace Innovation Fund; amending s. 331.310, F.S.; conforming a cross-reference; creating s. 331.372, F.S.; establishing the International Aerospace Innovation Fund; providing the purpose and duties of the fund; requiring Space Florida to secure funding from certain sources; requiring Space Florida to develop certain eligibility criteria; providing requirements for such eligibility criteria; requiring that funding be awarded in a certain manner; requiring Space Florida to establish a certain panel; requiring Space Florida to establish an application process for projects seeking funding from the fund; requiring Space Florida to identify and establish certain partnerships; authorizing Space Florida to negotiate and enter into bilateral agreements for certain purposes; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Present subsections (15) and (16) of section 331.3051, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (16)

CODING: Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

and (17), respectively, and a new subsection (15) is added to that section, to read:

331.3051 Duties of Space Florida.—Space Florida shall:

(15) Administer the International Aerospace Innovation Fund established under s. 331.372.

Section 2. Paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 331.310, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

331.310 Powers and duties of the board of directors.—

(2) The board of directors shall:

(e) Prepare an annual report of operations as a supplement to the annual report required under s. 331.3051(17) ~~s. 331.3051(16)~~. The report must include, but not be limited to, a balance sheet, an income statement, a statement of changes in financial position, a reconciliation of changes in equity accounts, a summary of significant accounting principles, the auditor's report, a summary of the status of existing and proposed bonding projects, comments from management about the year's business, and prospects for the next year.

Section 3. Section 331.372, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

331.372 International Aerospace Innovation Fund.—

(1) The International Aerospace Innovation Fund is established to accelerate global aerospace innovation by funding collaborative research and development projects, workforce development initiatives, and commercialization efforts. The

International Aerospace Innovation Fund shall be administered by Space Florida.

(2) The International Aerospace Innovation Fund shall:

(a) Develop partnerships between Florida-based aerospace companies and international aerospace companies.

(b) Drive innovation in critical technology areas, such as space exploration, advanced manufacturing, and space infrastructure.

(c) Attract global investment in this state's aerospace ecosystem.

(3) Space Florida shall secure funding for the International Aerospace Innovation Fund. Funding may be received from:

(a) The state, in the form of direct appropriations to Space Florida for purposes of the International Aerospace Innovation Fund, investment by the Florida Opportunity Fund, and any other investment, loan, or grant funds for which projects of the International Aerospace Innovation Fund qualify.

(b) Private sector investments. Space Florida may solicit matching funds from and partner with private aerospace companies and venture capital funds.

(c) International contributions. To the extent permitted under state law, Space Florida may collaborate with foreign space agencies or innovation authorities to co-fund International Aerospace Innovation Fund projects.

(4)(a) Space Florida shall develop eligibility criteria for projects that may be funded by the International Aerospace Innovation Fund. The eligibility criteria must include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

1. The project must involve at least one aerospace company or organization that is based in this state.

2. The project must be a partnership that involves at least one of the following:

a. An international aerospace company.

b. A university.

c. A space agency.

3. The project must be intended, and have demonstrated potential, for commercialization.

(b) Funding must be competitively awarded to eligible projects based on merit. Space Florida shall establish a panel of international aerospace experts to evaluate and recommend projects.

(c) Space Florida shall establish an application process for projects seeking funding by the International Aerospace Innovation Fund.

(5) Space Florida shall identify and establish partnerships, to the extent possible, with countries that have robust aerospace sectors.

(6) Space Florida may negotiate and enter into bilateral agreements for the purposes of this section, which may include,

but are not limited to, the establishment of co-funding commitments, intellectual property rights, and collaboration terms.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

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