

What the Garbage Tax Reinstatement Means for Lafourche Parish...

- In 1986, the voters of Lafourche Parish passed a one cent (one percent) sales tax to fund the parish-wide Solid Waste (Garbage) Management System. The system included take-all curbside residential garbage collection, commercial business waste disposal and curbside recycling services (the first of its kind in the state of Louisiana). The Solid Waste Management System was set up to deter illegal dumping and Parish dumpsites permanently closed. Forecasts predicted that the one cent sales tax would fund curbside garbage collection for the foreseeable future. However, the roll back of a portion in 1996, 3/10¢ (three tenths of one cent), cut funding short in the twentieth year. The passage of the one cent sales tax also supported the transport of garbage outside of Lafourche Parish to satisfy the outcry of the NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) groups concerned with reaching the goal of zero landfills parish-wide.

Benefits to Lafourche Parish...

- Benefits Lafourche Parish Residents....

The depletion of funding created by the rollback is an immediate problem. The *Garbage Tax Reinstatement* funds the existing and future garbage collection needs of Lafourche Parish residents. Residents won't face changes to the levels of service they receive today to include: twice a week take-all garbage collection, bulky waste removal (ex. tree debris) and drop-off recycling.

- Benefits Lafourche Parish Government....

The *Garbage Tax Reinstatement* funds existing and future garbage contract expenses. One-time funds and additional sources of revenue will continue to support projects throughout each District to improve drainage, flood protection, and to expand recreation rather than supplementing garbage collection. In addition, layoffs of employees can be avoided.

- Benefits Lafourche Parish....

The *Garbage Tax Reinstatement* keeps Lafourche Parish beautiful by transporting garbage to out-of-parish dumpsites which deters environmental hazards. Lafourche Parish is a retirement community, not just for its beauty, but for the unique culture and natural resources we offer. Protecting our resources for future generations through responsible solid waste practices is vital.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

- **When did this problem start?**

In 1996, ten years following the passage of the one cent sales tax to fund parish-wide garbage collection.

- **Who is to blame for the garbage fund deficit?**

No one is to blame; however, the Council approved the 3/10¢ roll back in 1996 as a way to give back to taxpayers, but the term of sustainable funding was not fully understood.

- **What other options are there besides reinstating the 3/10¢ portion of the garbage tax?**

1. Substantial reduction in services down to the current funding level.
2. Keep the current sales tax at 7/10¢ (seven tenths of one cent) and add a \$7/month User Fee on the water bill that would need to be approved by voters.
3. Roll back the entire existing tax and charge approximately \$25/month User Fee on the water bill that would need voter approval.
4. The Parish can get out of garbage collection all together and individual subscriptions services could be implemented: “pay as you throw”. Each resident would have to find service and pay directly.

- **Why can't you just negotiate a new contract?**

A contract can be renegotiated, but at the current funding levels, a substantial reduction in service would accompany the new contract.

- **How are you funding the garbage services now?**

Revenue from the current 7/10¢ sales tax plus supplemental funding from other Parish funds.

- **Why should taxpayers reinstate the 3/10¢ portion of the garbage tax?**

1. To maintain the current levels of service.
2. So that everyone can contribute based on their level of retail expenditures. *Note: Even non-residents that spend in Lafourche Parish help pay for garbage services through sales tax.
3. Reinstating the original will of the voters to fund the Solid Waste (Garbage) Management System.

- **Will taxes be increased again in the future when expenses continue to rise?**

The reinstatement should ensure adequate revenues for the foreseeable future.

- **How is this not a new tax?**

Voters originally approved the 1¢ sales tax for perpetuity (forever); it was rolled back by Council, not the voters. Additionally, with the recent reduction of State Sales Tax from 5% to 4.45%, reinstating the 3/10¢ (.30%) portion will still result in an overall net reduction of Lafourche Parish Sales Tax by .25%.