



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT, CRESCENT CITY CONNECTION BRIDGE

More than \$17.8 million remains to be spent from Crescent City Connection Bridge funds for bridge-related capital projects, bridge maintenance and ferry service in the New Orleans area, as of the end of 2013, according to a report made public Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

The state auditor's procedural report on the Department of Transportation and Development's bridge in New Orleans said that about \$31.3 million was in the Crescent City Connection Division trust accounts when the unit was abolished in 2012. Approximately \$12.8 million of that was transferred to the department to operate the bridge and ferry service in the New Orleans area after the CCC tolls were abolished.

Another \$1.2 million was turned over to the state DOTD to pay for bridge-related capital expenditures.

Auditors also found that DOTD did not properly advertise for bids for a \$466,000 repair contract as state law required. The report said DOTD officials told auditors the employee responsible for bidding the job "was not aware of the advertising requirement."

The report said that another \$103,051 in operating expense transactions were incorrectly attributed to the former Crescent City Connection Division operations. DOTD officials found an additional error in coding an expense to the bridge totaling almost \$71,300, the report said.

The tolls were set to expire on December 31, 2012, but New Orleans area voters at first approved extending them in a November 2012 election. A lawsuit was filed challenging the election returns and a judge overturned the election and ordered a new one in May of 2013. In the second election, voters rejected the toll extension.

The Legislature requested the audit on DOTD's compliance with laws dealing with bridge-related matters. Copies of the audit report were sent to the members of the House Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works and the Senate Committee on Transportation, Highways and Public Works.



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The report also said that an amnesty program, set up by DOTD in compliance with state law, intended to encourage payment of the outstanding tolls, but it resulted in a loss to the state of almost \$225,000.

Based on DOTD records, auditors said the net amnesty collections totaled \$128,681, but the cost to collect it amounted to \$353,283 which the agency said included “postage and labor to collect and analyze violation data, prepare letters to violators and process payments received.”

The amnesty program, which ran from August 1 through October 1, 2013, waived late fees and administrative charges normally assessed by DOTD and allowed violators to pay just the uncollected tolls. Twenty percent of the money collected was used to help offset the costs of the program.

For more information, contact:

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On Twitter: More than \$17.8 million remains to be spent from CCC funds for capital projects, bridge maintenance and ferry service.