

CITY OF PETALUMA

Audit Report

SPECIAL GAS TAX STREET IMPROVEMENT FUND

July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006



JOHN CHIANG
California State Controller

March 2008



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California State Controller

March 12, 2008

Pamela Torliatt, Mayor
City of Petaluma
27 Townview Lane
Petaluma, CA 94952

Dear Ms. Torliatt:

The State Controller's Office audited the City of Petaluma's Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund—highway users tax and Traffic Congestion Relief Fund allocations—for the period of July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006.

Our audit disclosed that the city accounted for and expended its Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund in compliance with requirements, except that the city understated the fund balance by \$200,000 as of June 30, 2006. This understatement resulted from an unsupported gas tax transfer.

If you have any questions, please contact Steven Mar, Chief, Local Government Audits Bureau, at (916) 324-7226.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

JEFFREY V. BROWNFIELD
Chief, Division of Audits

JVB/sk:vb

cc: Cinde Rebaloff
Accounting Manager
City of Petaluma

Contents

Audit Report

Summary	1
Background	1
Objective, Scope, and Methodology	1
Conclusion	2
Follow-Up on Prior Audit Findings	2
Views of Responsible Official	2
Restricted Use	2
Schedule 1—Reconciliation of Fund Balance	3
Finding and Recommendation	4

Audit Report

Summary

The State Controller's Office audited the City of Petaluma's Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund for the period of July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006. We also audited the Traffic Congestion Relief Fund allocations recorded in the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund for the period of July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2006.

Our audit disclosed that the city accounted for and expended its Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund—highway users tax and Traffic Congestion Relief Fund allocations—in compliance with requirements, except that the city understated the fund balance by \$200,000 as of June 30, 2006. This understatement resulted from an unsupported gas tax transfer.

Background

The State apportions funds monthly from the highway users tax account in the transportation tax fund to cities and counties for the construction, maintenance, and operation of local streets and roads. The highway users taxes derive from state taxes on the sale of motor vehicle fuels. In accordance with Article XIX of the California Constitution and Streets and Highways Code section 2101, a city must deposit all apportionments of highway users taxes in its Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund. A city must expend gas tax funds only for street-related purposes. We conducted our audit of the city's Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund under the authority of Government Code section 12410.

Government Code section 14556.5 created a Traffic Congestion Relief Fund (TCRF) in the State Treasury for allocating funds quarterly to cities and counties for street or road maintenance, reconstruction, and storm damage repair. Cities must deposit funds received into the city account designated for the receipt of state funds allocated for transportation purposes. The city recorded its TCRF allocations in the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund. We conducted our audit of the city's TCRF allocations under the authority of Revenue and Taxation Code section 7104.

Objective, Scope, and Methodology

Our audit objective was to determine whether the city accounted for and expended the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund in compliance with Article XIX of the California Constitution, the Streets and Highways Code, and Revenue and Taxation Code section 7104. To meet the audit objective, we determined whether the city:

- Properly deposited highway users tax apportionments TCRF allocations and other appropriate revenues in the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund;
- Expended funds exclusively for authorized street-related purposes; and
- Made available unexpended funds for future expenditures.

We conducted our audit according to *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. We did not audit the city's financial statements. We limited our audit scope to planning and performing the audit procedures necessary to obtain reasonable assurance that the city accounted for and expended the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund in accordance with the requirements of the Streets and Highways Code and Revenue and Taxation Code section 7104. Accordingly, we examined transactions, on a test basis, to determine whether the city expended funds for street purposes. We considered the city's internal controls only to the extent necessary to plan the audit.

Conclusion

Our audit disclosed that the city accounted for and expended its Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund in compliance with Article XIX of the California Constitution and the Streets and Highways Code for the period of July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006, except as noted in Schedule 1 and described in the Finding and Recommendation section of this report. The finding required an adjustment of \$200,000 to the city's accounting records. Our audit also disclosed that the city accounted for and expended its TCRF allocations recorded in the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund in compliance with Article XIX of the California Constitution, the Streets and Highways Code, and Revenue and Taxation Code section 7104 for the period of July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2006.

Follow-Up on Prior Audit Findings

Our prior audit report, issued on February 23, 1996, disclosed no findings.

Views of Responsible Official

We discussed the audit results with city representatives during an exit conference on June 6, 2007. Cinde Rubaloff, Accounting Manager, agreed with the audit results. Ms. Rubaloff further agreed that a draft audit report was not necessary and that the audit report could be issued as final.

Restricted Use

This report is intended for the information and use of city management and the SCO; it is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties. This restriction is not intended to limit distribution of this report, which is a matter of public record.

Original signed by

JEFFREY V. BROWNFIELD
Chief, Division of Audits

March 12, 2008

**Schedule 1—
Reconciliation of Fund Balance
July 1, 2005, through June 30, 2006**

	Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund		
	Highway Users Tax Allocation ¹	TCRF Allocation ²	Totals
Beginning fund balance per city	\$ 130,810	\$ —	\$ 130,810
Revenues	1,060,719	181,576	1,242,295
Total funds available	1,191,529	181,576	1,373,105
Expenditures	(770,004)	(181,576)	(951,580)
Ending fund balance per city	421,525	—	421,525
Timing adjustment:			
Accrual of June 2006 highway users tax apportionment (Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 34)	—	71,029	71,029
SCO adjustment: ³			
Finding—Unsupported gas tax transfers	200,000	—	200,000
Total adjustments	200,000	71,029	271,029
Ending fund balance per audit	<u>\$ 621,525</u>	<u>\$ 71,029</u>	<u>\$ 692,554</u>

¹ The city receives apportionments from the state highway users tax account, pursuant to Streets and Highways Code sections 2105, 2106, 2107, and 2107.5. The basis of the apportionments for Sections 2105, 2106, and 2107 varies, but the money may be used for any street purpose. Streets and Highways Code section 2107.5 restricts apportionments to administration and engineering expenditures, except for cities with populations of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. Those cities may use the funds for rights-of-way and for the construction of street systems.

² Government Code section 14556.5 created a Traffic Congestion Relief Fund in the State Treasury for allocating funds quarterly to cities and counties for street and road maintenance, reconstruction, and storm damage repair. The Traffic Congestion Relief Fund (TCRF) allocations were recorded in the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund. The audit period was July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2006.

³ See the Finding and Recommendation section.

Finding and Recommendation

**FINDING—
Unsupported gas tax
transfer**

The city transferred \$200,000 from the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund #2410 to the Capital Improvement Fund based on the budgeted amount for a project and not on the actual costs. The city did not incur any expenditures on that project during the fiscal year 2005-06.

Gas tax funds must be expended in accordance with Streets and Highways Code section 2101, and transfers of gas tax funds should be matched with actual street-related expenditures.

Recommendation

The city should reimburse the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund \$200,000. Additionally, the city should ensure that future transfers of gas tax funds be matched with actual street-related expenditures.

City's Response

The city agreed with our finding and transferred \$200,000 to the Special Gas Tax Street Improvement Fund, by journal entry #13700306, dated June 30, 2007.

**State Controller's Office
Division of Audits
Post Office Box 942850
Sacramento, CA 94250-5874**

<http://www.sco.ca.gov>