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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## County Attorney Al Hadeed makes vacation rentals presentation at Florida Tourist Development Tax Association Conference

**July 24, 2024** – Flagler County Attorney Al Hadeed on July 17 made a presentation about the current state of short-term rental legislation as part of the annual continuing education forum for the Florida Tourism Development Collectors Association. Professionals representing the Florida Department of Revenue, county tax collectors, as well as clerks of court and auditor offices are responsible for collecting the Tourist Development Tax – also referred to as resort tax, bed tax, local option tourist tax, or transient rental tax.

Hadeed explained the legislation that passed the Florida House and Senate but that Governor Ron DeSantis recently vetoed.

“The Governor’s veto message stated that the bill created too much bureaucracy for local governments and prevented them from enforcing standards appropriate for vacation rentals,” Hadeed told the tax collectors in Tampa. “Governor DeSantis criticized the one size fits all approach to the bill.”

Hadeed’s talk title “The New Age: What’s in Store for TDT Registrations and Collections” was written before the governor’s veto. He told the group that he predicted the “New Age” of regulation might come in next year’s legislature.

He explained to attendees why the bill was controversial and likely to be as contentious next year when the Legislature convenes in March 2025. He pointed out that the controversy stemmed from short term rentals locating in single family neighborhoods. Many disrupt the neighborhoods. Some rental properties become party houses and create nuisance type conditions. Local regulation was key to maintaining the residential character of these neighborhoods.

The bill also sought to regulate the short-term rental platforms such as Airbnb. There were gaps in the bill concerning the collection authority of the attendees, who were eager to discuss the technical aspects of the bill and agreed to form a committee to monitor the bills in the next legislative session.

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Andy Dance  
District 1

Greg Hansen  
District 2

David Sullivan  
District 3

Leann Pennington  
District 4

Donald O’Brien, Jr.  
District 5

Hadeed, who has served in his role as county attorney for more than 25 years, is well versed on vacation rental, having worked to thwart legislative attempts that undermine home rule authority over the past dozen years. Legislation that was successfully enacted in 2014 reinstated significant local government regulatory authority that the Legislature had previously preempted in 2011.

The county used the new authority to enact its regulatory ordinance that has been the model for many local governments around the state.

“We were also required to defend the ordinance in court against a broad attack by the short-term rental industry,” Hadeed said. “Owners of rental properties filed over \$22 million in Bert Harris damage claims against the county.”

The State of Florida enacted the Bert J. Harris, Jr., Private Property Rights Protection Act in 1995, which provides a specific process for landowners to seek relief when their property is unfairly affected by government action. Under the act, a claim exists if a governmental entity inordinately burdens an existing use of real property or a vested right to a specific use of real property.

“Flagler County prevailed on the legal issues and the claims were settled and dismissed with no monies paid to the rental property owners,” Hadeed said. “The 2014 reform legislation that we advocated for, along with many other local governments, remains the law to this day.”

For his continuing efforts, the Florida Association of County Attorneys in 2018 recognized Hadeed for his distinguished service in representing the interests of Florida’s local governments on vacation rental issues.

The Florida Association of County Attorneys in its latest annual conference appointed Hadeed to two committees: Finance and Tax Committee as its chair, and the Amicus Curiae Committee (which means “friend of the court”). That committee oversees appellate arguments submitted on behalf of Florida’s county governments to the Florida Supreme Court and the district appellate courts to protect local authority.

Hadeed also serves on the Board of Directors of the Florida Association of County Attorneys and has so since 2010.

“Al Hadeed has provided legislative updates to our association for the last several years. Each year, he brings to us the most current and potential legislative changes. His presentation is always powerful and one of the most popular sessions,” said Flagler County Tax Collector-Elect Shelly Edmonson, who is also past president of the Florida Tourist Development Tax Association. “He provides our members with a better understanding of the impact of these laws regarding Tourist Development Tax and how the changes could affect the way we currently operate. His knowledge is immeasurable in helping our members navigate these changes.”

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