



Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector

News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Gary Jones
405.521.3495

April 10, 2017

State Auditor Offers Sensible Budget Solutions

Oklahoma State Auditor Gary Jones is proposing lawmakers consider a sensible and reasonable approach to addressing the state's budget woes.

"We need to correct a taxing inequity while stabilizing revenue streams," Jones said. "This proposal makes sense, it helps reduce some of the uncertainty the legislature faces each year, and it should even be sufficient to fund the teacher pay raise."

Jones is recommending changing the gas production tax to 5% across the board, capping the individual income tax at 5%, implementing a moratorium on tax credits, and implementing a 5% tax on wind generation.

"Our residents and taxpayers need both stability and confidence when it comes to generating and spending state funds," Jones said. "This plan sets forth that stability necessary for lawmakers to engage in long-term planning instead of crisis budgeting. The plan also ensures a level of confidence by being able to estimate, beyond just a wild guess, the amount of revenues the state will collect."

Under Jones' plan, the unknown that surrounds both the number and the amount of tax credits awarded in this state will be eliminated. In addition to the moratorium, Jones is calling for each and every tax credit to undergo a legitimacy review to ensure each is worthy of taxpayer dollars. If, after the moratorium sunsets, it is decided worthy of renewing the credit, then that renewal process will be completely transparent.

"No more secret deals or lack of disclosure," Jones said. "If you want to accept tax dollars from Oklahomans, then Oklahomans deserve to know the details."

Jones also wants to remove the variables attached to the gross production tax. Instead of 2% for the first 3 years and 7% afterwards, it will be a flat 5% across the board.

And last, Oklahomans have invested millions for the promotion of wind energy. It's time Oklahomans get something back for their investment. Jones is proposing a 5% tax on the production of energy from wind.

Jones noted that he will be sharing these revenue proposals with legislative leaders working on next year's budget and is hopeful they'll take these ideas to heart.

"We've been in a position for too long of dealing only with the crisis in front of us and not looking to the future with any long-range plan," Jones said. "If we introduce a strong measure of stability in expected revenues then we'll be confident that government services will be delivered without severe budget cuts or revenue failures."

####