

SUNSHINE SKYWAY FACT SHEET

The Sunshine Skyway, 15-mile toll bridge connecting Pinellas and Manatee Counties over lower Tampa Bay, was built in 1950-54 after an agreement between the Port Authority of St. Petersburg and the State Improvement Commission (now Florida Development Commission).

This agreement provided:

The St. Petersburg Port Authority--an arm of the government of the City of St. Petersburg--would turn its assets over to the state. These assets included ferry boats, valuable land, bridge franchise, right-of-way, ferry boat equipment and cash on hand. Total assets were valued at more than \$1,000,000.

The Improvement Commission in exchange for the assets agreed to finance and build the Skyway and did finance and build it and made this further pledge, ratified by the State Road Board:

"Be it further resolved that this commission agrees for itself and in behalf of its successors that if and when the bonds are issued for the construction of said bridge have been paid off that the commission will convey the bridge to the State Road Department to operate as a free bridge."

When the present road board attempted to ignore and abrogate this pledge and refinance the bonds, perpetuating the tolls, 40,000 Pinellas County citizens signed petitions against such refinancing and asked the state to honor its legally and morally binding commitment. Governor Collins called off the refinancing.

Detailed fact sheet is attached.

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