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## Davie kills plan to charge fees to drivers who cause crashes.

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### Davie kills plan to charge fees to drivers who cause crashes.

Byline: Susannah Bryan

Jun. 21--DAVIE -- A town proposal that would have charged drivers cited in accidents on freeways and state roads died just before midnight Wednesday in a unanimous vote by the Council.

"No matter what way you look at it, this smells bad," Vice Mayor Bryan Caletka said of the proposal. "This is the worst piece of legislation I've ever seen a municipality try to pass. I think this is a serious blunder."

The proposal, billed as a "cost recovery program" by the town, would have levied an average fee of \$840 to the insurance company of the motorist found to be at fault in the accident. If the insurance company declined to pay, the town would write off the fees of residents but send non-residents a bill, according to the town's consultant.

On Wednesday, Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo and Police Chief John George defended the plan as a way to recoup the costs of responding to accidents on the many highways surrounding Davie.

The program would have added an estimated \$900,000 a year to town coffers. Town Administrator Gary Shimun warned the Council the town was counting on the money. "If you don't do this, we'll need to come up with another \$900,000 in [budget] cuts," he told them minutes before the vote.

The proposal, tentatively approved by council members on June 6, was to be tabled until July 18 to give town officials more time to research legal concerns.

But Caletka, who cast the lone dissenting vote earlier this month, urged the Council to kill the proposal before it proceeded further. He quickly won support from Mayor Tom Truex and Councilman Michael Crowley.

Councilwoman Susan Starkey and Councilman Marlon Luis urged waiting to make a decision until the town gathered more information, but voted with the majority after hearing from the town's legal counsel.

Interim Town Attorney James Cherof said the proposal would need tailoring to ensure it was fair and equitable.

"As drafted, I recommend you not approve this ordinance," he said.

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