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## **County's \$100M suit against online travel sites moves forward**

Orlando Business Journal - by [Richard Bilbao](#) Staff Writer

Orange County could recoup nearly \$100 million in lost tourist development taxes if it wins a three-year dispute with online travel sites such as Orbitz, Expedia and Travelocity.

Tom Drage, county attorney, said a suit filed in state circuit court by the county three years ago will be heard sometime in August regarding millions in resort tax dollars that online travel companies neglected to pay.

The 6 percent tax charged on hotel and motel room sales is used to promote tourism, convention center operations, and local history and arts centers.

County officials filed suit in March 2006 alleging travel sites such as Orbitz and Expedia buy rooms from hotels at wholesale prices, then mark up the room rates and profit from the difference in the prices. The issue: The taxes paid on the sold rooms reflect the wholesale price and not the actual retail price of the room.