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Push for online travel brokers to pay Florida hotel tax continues

South Florida Business Journal - by [Bill Frogameni](#)

With historic revenue shortfalls and a dip in tourism, the conflict between Florida and online travel brokers promises to heat up in 2010.

In Florida and nationwide, online retailers have faced lawsuits and legislative efforts to collect hotel taxes that state and local governments say they are withholding.

In Florida, there could be hundreds of millions of dollars every year the companies are not paying, said Stuart Blumberg, the outgoing president and CEO of the **Greater Miami & the Beaches Hotel Association**. That's money that doesn't get applied to promoting tourism. Blumberg is trying to push the Legislature to strengthen existing laws so governments could more easily collect the money.

The concern is that online retailers pay for hotel rooms at a negotiated rate before selling them at a higher price. The retailers pay the tax on the amount they paid for the room, as opposed to the amount the customer pays.