



Local Option Sales Tax

ORANGEBURG COUNTY REFERENDUM | Frequently Asked Questions

What is being proposed?

A Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) is a **one-cent county sales and use tax** intended primarily to provide property tax relief. It is not currently in effect or approved. **On August 17, Orangeburg County Council voted to put the question on the November 3, 2026, ballot. County voters will decide whether to approve it.**

What exactly will voters see on the ballot?

“Must a one percent (1%) sales and use tax be levied in **Orangeburg County** for the purpose of allowing a credit against a taxpayer’s county and municipal ad valorem tax liability and for the purpose of funding **county and municipal operations in the Orangeburg County area?**”

Why propose this tax?

The proposal would shift part of the cost of local government from property owners to people who make taxable purchases in **Orangeburg County**, including residents and visitors traveling between Charleston and Columbia. Most revenue would provide credits on property tax bills; the remainder would fund county and municipal operations.

What purchases would be subject to the additional 1%?

- Groceries and other unprepared food
- Ordinary retail purchases, including clothing, hardware, and restaurant meals
- Taxable services, including some utility service
- Items bought elsewhere and first used or stored in the county, through the use tax

What would be excluded?

- Cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, campers, and other titled property subject to the capped state sales tax
- Prescription drugs and other standard state sales tax exemptions
- Farm machinery, feed, seed, fertilizer, and livestock purchased by a farmer holding a SCATE card
- Materials delivered under a construction contract signed before the start date, if filed with the Department of Revenue within six months

How the proposal would work

Rates, timing, estimated credits, and use of revenue

Who would pay, and when would it begin?

Anyone making taxable purchases in **Orangeburg County**, whether a resident or visitor, would pay. The proposal adds 1% to the existing 6% state sales tax and 1% county Capital Projects Sales Tax on purchases subject to all three taxes. **If voters approve it in November, the LOST will begin July 1, 2027.**

What property tax credits are estimated?

The following examples are based on estimated revenue. Actual credits would depend on collections and applicable tax bills.

Property Appraised Value	Outside City Limits - Property Tax Credit	Inside City Limits - Property Tax Credit
Home appraised at \$150,000	\$172	\$451
Vehicle appraised at \$20,000	\$23	\$37
Small business building appraised at \$500,000	\$575	\$930

How would the revenue be divided?

71% — Property Tax Credit Fund. The county receives 67% of this fund for county property tax relief. Municipalities share 33%, allocated by population, for municipal property tax relief. This fund may only be used to reduce property tax bills; council has no discretion to spend it otherwise.

29% — County and municipal revenue fund. This portion can fund general county and municipal operations. It is divided based on municipal populations and where sales occur.

Credit examples are estimates; actual amounts may vary.