

# WE PAY

ALREADY

[WEALREADYPAY.ORG](http://WEALREADYPAY.ORG)

## WE ALREADY PAY SO WHY DO WE HAVE TO PAY MORE?

The Beaufort County Council recently passed an Ordinance to levy a Beaufort County Law Enforcement Service Charge and Uniform User Fee on the annual property tax bills of Hilton Head Island residents and business owners. This charge/fee will generate \$4.4 million more in revenue for Beaufort County on top of what Hilton Head Island property owners already pay for law enforcement services.

This is an unfair and inequitable charge/fee that will be implemented and collected from Hilton Head Island residents if not stopped. No other municipality in Beaufort County will have this fee imposed upon their property owners.

We have utilized the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) prior to and after Hilton Head Island's incorporation as a Town in 1983. To be clear, the BCSO does an excellent job on Hilton Head Island and provides a range of law enforcement services for our community including 911 response to crime and assistance for help, general patrol, beach patrol, event security and more. These are services our current tax dollars pay for.

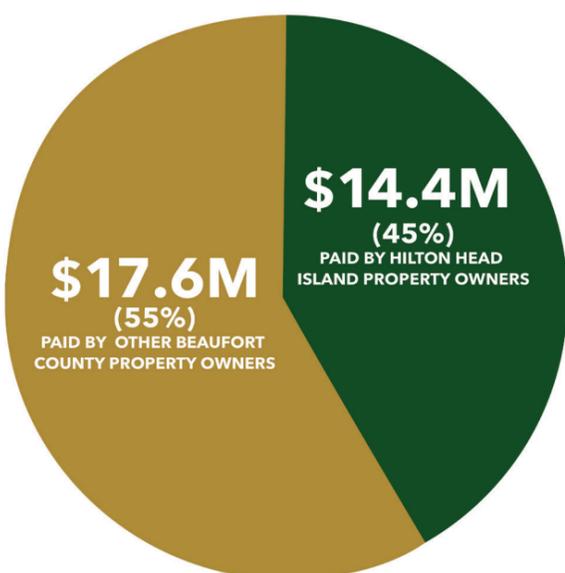
## WHAT WE PAY

Currently, Hilton Head Island residents contribute more than \$52 million in taxes to Beaufort County's overall budget. Of that amount, \$14.4 million is allocated for law enforcement services. For many years, the Town paid an additional \$3.2 million and provided the BCSO with administrative office space and stipends for first year deputies living and working on the Island. Last year, the Town Council determined it was not appropriate to continue paying millions more for services Island property owners already substantially contributed to as part of their property taxes.

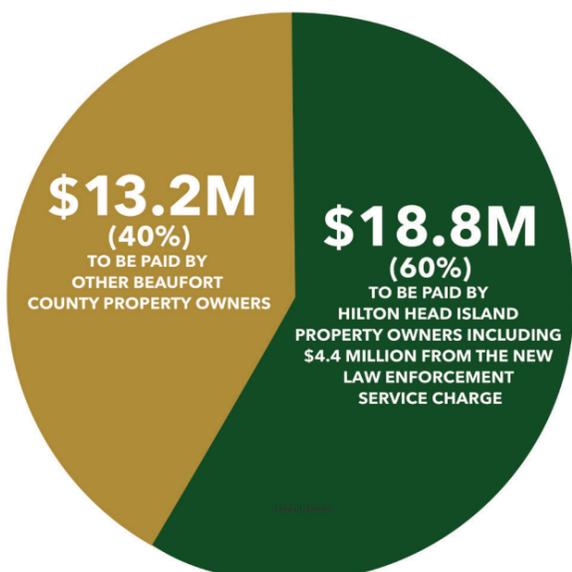
## HERE IS A BREAKDOWN OF WHAT WE ALREADY PAY FOR BEAUFORT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SERVICES:

### BEAUFORT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE OPERATING BUDGET \$32 MILLION

WHAT WE PAID BEAUFORT COUNTY FOR  
LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES IN FISCAL YEAR 2020



WHAT WE WILL PAY BEAUFORT COUNTY FOR  
LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES IN FISCAL YEAR 2021



In recent months, Town leaders have held discussions with County leaders seeking an equitable resolution to make up for the \$3.2 million loss the County suffered as a result of Town action. County leaders rejected proposals from the Town, which included having the Town assume responsibility for some maintenance of County-owned parks and roads on the Island, and for County financial contributions to our local Island Rec Center.

Instead, the Beaufort County Council voted to impose a Law Enforcement Service Charge and Uniform User Fee for the Town of Hilton Head Island.

## WHY THIS CHARGE/FEE MUST BE BLOCKED

★ Putting this charge/fee into effect places an unfair burden on Hilton Head Island tax payers. As Hilton Head Island property owners, you already pay for law enforcement services. Essentially, with this charge/fee, property owners would be taxed twice for law enforcement, and in some instances, three times. Seventy percent of the Island's residents live in a gated community, where they also pay for and have the added protection of private security. This private security relieves some of the burden from the Sheriff's deputies so they do not have to respond to every infraction that occurs in these private communities.

★ Imposing extra fees only on Hilton Head Island's property owners is grossly inequitable. In fiscal year 2020, taxes from Hilton Head Island property owners accounted for 45% of the BCSO budget. With the new charge/fee, your taxes will make up 60% of the BCSO budget.

★ Our community values safety. Everyone deserves to be protected, but we should not be overtaxed for this right.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING TO STOP COLLECTION OF THIS CHARGE/FEE

★ To address this inequity and protect the interests of Hilton Head Island property owners and residents, the Town of Hilton Head Island has filed an injunction against Beaufort County to prevent implementation and collection of this charge/fee.

★ Town leaders will continue working with Beaufort County leaders to resolve this issue.

★ We have developed a website ([wealreadypay.org](http://wealreadypay.org)) that provides more information about this ongoing matter and answers to questions you may have about the Beaufort County Law Enforcement Service Charge and Uniform User Fee.

## WHY YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED

As a property owner, you already pay for law enforcement services. You should not be taxed twice for these services.

## WHAT PROPERTY OWNERS AND RESIDENTS CAN DO

Help us stop this charge/fee.

★ Hilton Head Island property owners may express their concerns about having to pay this fee by calling or sending a message to the Beaufort County Administrator at 843-255-2026 and Beaufort County Council at 843-255-2180. Ask them to repeal their Ordinance.

★ Visit [beaufortcountysc.gov](http://beaufortcountysc.gov) and click on the "Contact" tab at the top of the website home page. In the contact menu that appears at the bottom of the page, select Citizengram. On this form, choose to send a message to the County Administrator and/or County Council.

