

ATTESTATION ENGAGEMENT

Columbia County

Pennsylvania

19-000

Liquid Fuels Tax Fund

And ACT 44 Tax Fund

For the Period

January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014

June 2016



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General

Eugene A. DePasquale • Auditor General



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of the Auditor General
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0018
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EUGENE A. DePASQUALE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Independent Auditor's Report

The Honorable Leslie Richards
Secretary
Department of Transportation
Harrisburg, PA 17120

We examined the accompanying Form MS-991 With Adjustments for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments of Columbia County for the period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014. The county's management is responsible for the Form MS-991 and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the Form MS-991 With Adjustments and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments based on our examination.

Our examination was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the standards applicable to attestation engagements contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. An examination includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting Columbia County's Form MS-991 and Report of Act 44 Tax Fund for the period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 and performing such other procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. We believe that our examination provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We are mandated by Section 403 of *The Fiscal Code*, 72 P.S. § 403, to audit each county's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund and Act 44 Tax Fund to ensure that funds received are expended in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States include attestation engagements as a separate type of audit. An attestation engagement performed pursuant to *Government Auditing Standards* involves additional standards that exceed the standards provided by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Accordingly, this attestation engagement complies with both *Government Auditing Standards* and Section 403 of *The Fiscal Code*.

As described in Finding And Recommendation section of this report and Note 4, the adjustments included on the Form MS-991 With Adjustments and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments are made by the Department of the Auditor General.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

In our opinion, the Form MS-991 With Adjustments and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments presents, in all material respects, the information required by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund and Act 44 Tax Fund of Columbia County for the period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, in conformity with the criteria set forth in Note 1.

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we are required to report all deficiencies that are considered to be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses in internal control; fraud and noncompliance with provisions of laws or regulations that have a material effect on the Form MS-991 and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund; and any other instances that warrant the attention of those charged with governance; noncompliance with provisions of contracts or grant agreements, and abuse that has a material effect on the Form MS-991 and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund. We are also required to obtain and report the views of responsible officials concerning the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as any planned corrective actions. We performed our examination to express an opinion on whether the Form MS-991 and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the internal control over reporting on the Form MS-991 and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund or on compliance and other matters; accordingly, we express no such opinions.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose of expressing an opinion on whether the Form MS-991 and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund are presented in accordance with the criteria described above and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified. However, as described below, we identified certain deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses and other deficiencies that we consider to be significant deficiencies.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the Form MS-991 and the Reports of Act 44 Tax Fund will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. We consider the deficiency below to be a material weakness.

- Failure To Properly Prepare Form MS-991.

Independent Auditor's Report (Continued)

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Form MS-991 and the Reports of Act 44 Tax Fund are free from material misstatement, we performed tests of Columbia County's compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of amounts on the Form MS-991 and the Reports of Act 44 Tax Fund. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our engagement, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the management of Columbia County and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We appreciate the courtesy extended by Columbia County to us during the course of our examination. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michael B. Kashishian, CPA, CGAP, CFE, Director, Bureau of County Audits, at 717-787-1363.



Eugene A. DePasquale
Auditor General

May 4, 2016

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COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
BACKGROUND
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

Background

The Vehicle Code makes provisions and provides funding for County Liquid Fuels and Act 44 Programs. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has regulatory administration and oversight of the funds supporting these county programs. Counties are required to comply with those provisions and to report annually.

The Vehicle Code imposes a state tax on liquid fuels and fuels used or sold and delivered by distributors within the Commonwealth (75 Pa. C.S. § 9004(a)). One-half cent of the tax collected on each gallon of liquid fuels is deposited in the Commonwealth's Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. The Vehicle Code further provides for the disposition and use of this tax, including the allocations to counties in June and December of each year to fund construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of county roads, streets and bridges. The allocation to the respective counties is made in the ratio that the average amount returned to each county during the three preceding years bears to the average amount returned to all counties during the three preceding years (75 Pa C.S. § 9010).

The Vehicle Code, as recently amended by Act 44 of 2007 (July 18, 2007, P.L.169), requires the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to make annual contributions for the benefit of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Motor License Fund, and further requires the Department of Transportation to distribute \$5,000,000 of the annual contribution to counties (75 Pa. C.S. § 8915.6). The annual distribution to counties is determined based upon the ratio of square footage of deck area of a county's county-owned bridges to the total square footage of deck area of county-owned bridges throughout the Commonwealth. The reporting of the square footage of deck area of a county's county-owned bridges is required as part of the National Bridge Inspection Standards Program.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2014 FORM MS-991 WITH ADJUSTMENTS

	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments (Finding)</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
Balance, January 1, 2014	\$ 1,095,414.50	\$ -	\$ 1,095,414.50
<u>Receipts:</u>			
State allocations	172,114.07	-	172,114.07
Interest (Note 3)	3,096.35	286.11	3,382.46
Reimbursable agreements (Note 5)	189,028.97	-	189,028.97
Miscellaneous (Note 6)	11,021.38	-	11,021.38
Total receipts	<u>375,260.77</u>	<u>286.11</u>	<u>375,546.88</u>
Total funds available	<u>1,470,675.27</u>	<u>286.11</u>	<u>1,470,961.38</u>
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Construction	81,604.61	478.65	82,083.26
Maintenance and repair	76,283.65	(11,048.05)	65,235.60
Administrative	-	-	-
Grants to political subdivisions	200,619.25	-	200,619.25
Miscellaneous (Note 6)	451.98	10,569.40	11,021.38
Total expenditures	<u>358,959.49</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>358,959.49</u>
Balance, December 31, 2014	1,111,715.78	286.11	1,112,001.89
Unpaid encumbrances (Note 7)	<u>930,954.39</u>	<u>(98,485.19)</u>	<u>832,469.20</u>
Unencumbered balance, December 31, 2014	<u>\$ 180,761.39</u>	<u>\$ 98,771.30</u>	<u>\$ 279,532.69</u>

Notes To Form MS-991 And Report Of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments are an integral part of this report.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
2014 REPORT OF ACT 44 TAX FUND
WITH ADJUSTMENTS

	<u>Reported</u>	<u>Adjustments (Note 4)</u>	<u>Adjusted Amount</u>
Balance, January 1, 2014	\$ 119,346.34	\$ -	\$ 119,346.34
<u>Receipts:</u>			
Act 44 Funds	66,243.82	-	66,243.82
Interest (Note 3)	41.07	4.57	45.64
Reimbursable Agreement Receipts	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Receipts	-	-	-
Total receipts	<u>66,284.89</u>	<u>4.57</u>	<u>66,289.46</u>
Total funds available	<u>185,631.23</u>	<u>4.57</u>	<u>185,635.80</u>
<u>Expenditures:</u>			
Construction	-	-	-
Maintenance and repair	-	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	-	-
Total expenditures	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Balance, December 31, 2014	<u>\$ 185,631.23</u>	<u>\$ 4.57</u>	<u>\$ 185,635.80</u>

Notes To Form MS-991 And Report Of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments are an integral part of this report.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
NOTES TO FORM MS-991 AND
REPORT OF ACT 44 TAX FUND WITH ADJUSTMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

1. Criteria

A. *The Vehicle Code* prescribes criteria for liquid fuels program funds (75 Pa C.S. § 9010). The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's *Publication 9* provides more specific policies and procedures to counties for the administration and reporting of the liquid fuels program funds. In the event of any discrepancies between the two, the legislation governs.

(1) Funds received by the counties must be deposited in a special fund designated as the County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund and no other money may be deposited and commingled. Money should be invested to earn interest until expended.

- For purposes of payments under (2), below, the county may borrow and place in the special fund money not in excess of the liquid fuels tax funds to be received during the current calendar year.

(2) Payments from the special fund may be used for:

- construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of roads, highways, bridges and curb ramps from a road or highway to provide for access by individuals with disabilities consistent with Federal and State law;
- property damages and compensation of viewers for services in eminent domain proceedings involving roads, highways, and bridges;
- construction, reconstruction, operation and maintenance of publicly owned ferryboat operations;
- interest and principal payments on road, bridge, or publicly owned ferryboat operation bonds or sinking fund charges;
- acquisition, maintenance, repair and operation of traffic signs and signals;
- erection and maintenance of stop and go signal lights, blinkers and other like traffic control devices;
- indirect costs, including benefit costs, overhead and other administrative charges for those county employees directly engaged in eligible projects, not to exceed 10 percent of the yearly allocation to the county; and

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
NOTES TO FORM MS-991 AND
REPORT OF ACT 44 TAX FUND WITH ADJUSTMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

1. Criteria (Continued)

- individual vehicle liability insurance for equipment purchased under the fund, not to exceed 10 percent of the yearly allocation to the county.
- (3) Counties may not make expenditures from the special fund for new construction on roads, bridges, curb ramps, or publicly owned ferryboat operations without the approval of the plans for construction by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. And, counties may not allocate money from the special fund to political subdivisions within the county until the application and the contracts or plans for the proposed expenditures have been made on a form prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.
- (4) Counties may encumber current funds for future road and bridge construction, reconstruction, and maintenance projects including viable municipal projects. Counties must redistribute any unencumbered balance in the special fund to political subdivisions if the unencumbered balance is more than the county's receipts during the preceding twelve month period.
- (5) Counties must submit a report to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation by January 15 for the period ending December 31 on prescribed Form MS-991, The Report of County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund, showing the receipts and expenditures of the money received by the county from the Commonwealth. Upon failure to file the report or instances of any non-compliant payments, allocations, or expenditures, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation will withhold further funding until the delinquent report is filed, the money is allocated, or the expenditures for the prior 12 months are approved.
- B. *The Vehicle Code*, as recently amended by Act 44 of 2007 (July 18, 2007, P.L. 169), prescribes the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation with oversight authority of the Act 44 funds distributed to the counties from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission's annual contribution of \$5,000,000 to the Commonwealth's Motor License Fund. The County's Act 44 Tax Fund is used to account for the distribution made to the county from the Department of Transportation and the payments made for construction and maintenance of county-owned bridges.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
NOTES TO FORM MS-991 AND
REPORT OF ACT 44 TAX FUND WITH ADJUSTMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

1. Criteria (Continued)

Basis Of Presentation

In accordance with reporting requirements prescribed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, the Report of County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund With Adjustments and the Report of Act 44 Tax Fund With Adjustments do not constitute complete financial presentations of the county's assets, liabilities, expenses, and fund balance but include the receipts, expenditures, and fund balances of the County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund and the County Act 44 Tax Fund, respectively.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation prescribes that the county report the following on the MS-991 form, *Report of County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund*:

- A. The balance in the County Liquid Fuels Tax Fund at the beginning of the report calendar year.
- B. Receipts which must be itemized and include interest, reimbursable agreements, and miscellaneous items such as loans, sale of salvageable material, and damage claims to road or bridge property.

Refer to the related Notes: Note 3, Interest Earnings; Note 5, Reimbursable Agreements; Note 6, Duplicate Payment Of Invoice.

- C. Accounts receivable (to be realized within 60 days of the year end).
- D. Total Liquid Fuels Tax funds available for expenditure and encumbrances.
- E. Expenditures for county-owned roads, highways, and bridges.

Refer to Note 6, Duplicate Payment OF Invoice.

- F. Accounts payable (accrued wages, accrued payroll taxes, and accounts payable vendors to be realized within 60 days of the year end).
- G. The balance in the fund at the close of the report calendar year.
- H. Encumbered and unencumbered balances on hand at the close of the report calendar year.

Refer to Note 7, Encumbrances.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
NOTES TO FORM MS-991 AND
REPORT OF ACT 44 TAX FUND WITH ADJUSTMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

2. Deposits

The County Code, Title 16 P.S § 17067, authorizes the county to deposit its funds in the following:

- Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits, other than certificates of deposit or share accounts of institutions having their principal place of business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) or other like insurance. For any amount above the insured maximum, the depository shall pledge approved collateral.
- Certificates of deposit purchased from institutions insured by the FDIC or other like insurance to the extent that such accounts are so insured. For any amounts in excess of the insured maximum, such deposits shall be collateralized by a pledge or assignment of assets. Certificates of deposit may not exceed 20 percent of a bank's total capital surplus or 20 percent of a savings and loan or savings bank's assets minus liabilities.

Deposits consist of receipts and deposits in financial institutions. Pennsylvania statutes require all deposits to be insured and, for any amount above the insured maximum, to be secured with approved collateral as defined.

There were no deposits exposed to custodial credit risk as of December 31, 2014. Custodial credit risk, as defined by GASB No. 40, includes deposits that are not covered by depository insurance and the deposits are uncollateralized, collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution, or collateralized with securities held by the pledging financial institution's trust department or agent but not in the county's name.

Fund Balance

The fund balance for the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund consists of the following:

Cash	\$1,112,001.89
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The fund balance for the Act 44 Tax Fund consists of the following:

Cash	\$185,635.80
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COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
NOTES TO FORM MS-991 AND
REPORT OF ACT 44 TAX FUND WITH ADJUSTMENTS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

3. Interest Earnings

Our examination disclosed that the county deposited idle liquid fuels tax money in an interest-bearing account which earned \$3,382.46 during 2014, thus providing additional funds for road maintenance and repairs.

Additionally, the county deposited idle Act 44 tax money in an interest-bearing account which earned \$45.64 during 2014, thus providing additional funds for road maintenance and repairs.

4. Adjustments

2014 Report of Act 44 Tax Fund

An adjustment of \$4.57 was made to "Interest" because interest earned was understated.

5. Reimbursable Agreements

During our examination, we noted that the county entered into reimbursable agreements with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for bridge construction and engineering. During our current examination period, the county received \$189,028.97 during 2014 as a result of these agreements. As of December 31, 2014, \$11,802.02 was due the Liquid Fuels Tax Fund. This reimbursement was received on January 30, 2015, which was subsequent to our examination period.

6. Duplicate Payment Of Invoice

On April 25, 2014, the county expended \$11,021.38 from its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for an invoice twice using check No. 109041. On May 31, 2014, the county received a reimbursement of \$11,021.38 from the vendor for this invoice and deposited the money into its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund.

7. Encumbrances

As of December 31, 2014, \$832,469.20 was encumbered. This amount consists of \$742,591.20 for county projects and \$89,878.00 for grants to political subdivisions.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

Finding - Failure To Properly Prepare Form MS-991

Our examination disclosed that there were numerous errors made in the preparation of the county's 2014 Form MS-991. These errors resulted in the following adjustments:

- An adjustment of \$286.11 was made to "Interest" because interest earned was understated.
- Adjustments were made to "Construction," "Maintenance and repair," and "Miscellaneous" because expenditures of \$11,048.05 were misclassified.
- An adjustment of \$(98,485.19) was made to "Unpaid encumbrances" because of the following reporting errors:

<u>Project Number</u>	<u>Actual Amount</u>	<u>Amount Reported</u>	<u>Adjustment</u>
14-19222-01CA	\$ -	\$ 3,221.06	\$ (3,221.06)
14-19218-01CA	-	6,904.15	(6,904.15)
14-19217-01CA	-	9,377.54	(9,377.54)
13-19000-01	57,591.20	57,601.21	(10.01)
14-19000-01	-	78,972.43	(78,972.43)
Totals	<u>\$57,591.20</u>	<u>\$156,076.39</u>	<u>\$(98,485.19)</u>

Good internal controls ensure that the county completes its Form MS-991 accurately and completely. The failure to properly complete Form MS-991 increases the risk that errors or misappropriations may occur and remain undetected.

Recommendation

We recommend that the county ensure that its Form MS-991 is complete and accurate.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

Finding - Failure To Properly Prepare Form MS-991 (Continued)

Management's Response

The county officials stated:

I understand that this is due to the number of close out entries. There is a failure in the software that PENNDOT is utilizing as it does not zero balance projects when a completion report has been done. When the 2014 MS-991 was filed by written copy, this was explained in a letter with the filing. Any county should not be held accountable for these changes. PENNDOT needs to get their program fixed so that it does zero balance with a completion report.

Auditor's Conclusion

During our next examination we will determine if the county complied with our recommendation.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
SUMMARY OF PRIOR EXAMINATION RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

Summary Of Prior Examination Recommendations

In our prior report we recommended that the Department of Transportation review our examination finding to determine if the county should reimburse \$67,663.52 to its Liquid Fuels Tax Fund for failing to submit a completion report.

During our current examination we reviewed a letter dated August 31, 2015, from the Department of Transportation informing the county that the reimbursement of \$67,663.52 would not be required.

In our prior report we also recommended that the county submit a completed Form MS-999 to the Department of Transportation for the project.

During our current examination we noted that the county complied with our recommendations.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
SUMMARY OF EXIT CONFERENCE
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

An exit conference was held April 13, 2016. Those participating were:

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Ms. Gail Kipp, Chief Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Mr. Brian P. Dries, Auditor

The results of the examination were presented and discussed in their entirety.

COLUMBIA COUNTY
LIQUID FUELS TAX FUND
AND ACT 44 TAX FUND
REPORT DISTRIBUTION
FOR THE PERIOD
JANUARY 1, 2014 TO DECEMBER 31, 2014

This report was initially distributed to:

The Honorable Leslie Richards
Secretary
Department of Transportation

Columbia County
35 West Main Street
Bloomsburg, PA 17815

The Honorable Chris Young
Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

The Honorable Cindy Creveling
Treasurer

The Honorable Rodman R. Ralston
Chair of Auditors

Ms. Gail Kipp
Chief Clerk

This report is a matter of public record and is available online at www.PaAuditor.gov. Media questions about the report can be directed to the Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General, Office of Communications, 229 Finance Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120; via email to: news@PaAuditor.gov.