

PBC Legislative Update

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Week 7 – 2012 State Legislative Session

State Issues

Budget

By: Florida Association of Counties, Ericks Consultants, Akerman Senterfitt, and County Staff

A side-by-side comparison of the House and Senate budget highlights the county has been tracking are detailed in the chart below.

Budget Item	Final Budget	Governor's	House	Senate	Difference
	SFY 2012	SFY 2013	SFY 2013	SFY 2013	\$ Variance
	All Funds	All Funds	All Funds	All Funds	H2013 vs. S2013
1 Section 3 - Human Services					
2 Agency for Health Care Administration					
3 #161-166 - Florida Kidcare Program	520,962,322	517,502,789	522,118,975	539,160,556	(17,041,581)
4 #187 - Rural Hospital Financial Assistance Program	14,030,766	14,030,766	14,030,766	14,030,766	-
5 #191 - Home Health Services	171,267,718	142,753,911	187,750,601	188,412,521	(661,920)
6 #203- Medicaid Patient Transportation	141,958,450	137,651,634	143,226,630	143,226,630	-
7 #212 - Rural Health Services	101,277,171	123,959,174	125,677,607	125,677,607	-
8 #220 - Home and Community Based Services	1,024,717,619	1,024,717,619	1,097,668,742	1,068,873,339	28,795,403
9					-
10 Agency for Persons with Disabilities					
11 #251, 254, & 325 & 410 - Home & Community Based Service Waiver	980,182,819	959,910,448	926,216,209	1,055,903,579	(129,687,370)
12					-
13 Department of Children and Family Services					
14 Reinvestment Grant - DCF Share	-	-	-	-	-
15 #343 - Public Safety, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Local Match	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000		3,000,000
16 #344 - Children's Mental Health	47,011,346	45,724,743	45,886,569	45,724,743	161,826
17 #183 & 345 - Community Mental Health	297,521,087	283,349,944	289,240,371	221,349,406	67,890,965
18 #346 - Baker Act Services	62,333,949	62,333,949	62,733,949	62,733,949	-
19 #357 - Children's Baker Act Services	14,021,460	308,734	308,734	8,493,673	(8,184,939)
20 #365 - Children and Adolescent Substance Abuse Services	72,215,003	70,703,312	70,701,312	70,701,312	-
21 #366 - Community Substance Abuse Services	123,518,882	125,897,906	121,072,564	97,537,562	23,535,002
22 #376 - Challenge Grants	2,031,354	2,031,354		2,031,354	(2,031,354)
23 #377 - Fed. Emer. Shelter Program	3,822,427	4,946,503	4,946,503	4,946,503	-
24 - Homeless Housing Assistance	12,000,000				-
25 Homeless Prevention					-
26 #387 - Financial Assistance Payments - Cash	177,522,123	155,862,636	155,439,285	155,439,285	-
27 #323 - Grants to Sheriffs for Protective Investigations	45,985,592	47,491,154	47,491,154	45,985,592	1,505,562
28					-
29 Department of Elder Affairs					
30 #405 - Community Care Fore the Elderly	53,044,996	53,044,996	58,043,746	53,822,537	4,221,209
31 #407 & 416 - Older Americans Act	97,590,726	97,590,726	97,590,726	97,547,823	42,903
32 #412 - Local Services Program	8,196,109	7,465,811	7,465,811	7,465,811	-
33					-
34 Department of Health					
35 #468, 494, 509, 521, 576 - County Health Units	155,844,006	145,871,169	139,304,034	137,161,888	2,142,146
36 #469, 535 - Primary Care Program	19,221,512	19,221,512	19,221,512	19,321,512	(100,000)
37 #472- School Health Services	20,319,530	20,319,530	20,153,828	20,035,258	118,570
38 #531A - County Health Dept. - Construction, Renovation, & Equip.	32,920,983		20,280,900	7,533,960	12,746,940
39 #531B - Maintenance & Repair of County Health Departments	7,533,960		7,533,960	8,313,858	(779,898)
40 #536 - Emergency Medical Services County Grants	6,211,675	6,211,675	6,211,675	6,211,675	-
41 #537- Emergency Medical Services Matching Grants	4,681,461	4,681,461	4,681,461	4,681,461	-
42 #577 - Local Health Councils	1,006,000	1,006,000	1,006,000	1,006,000	-
43					-

44	Section 4 - Criminal Justice and Corrections						-
45	Department of Corrections						-
46	#770Q - #770T - Pre Trial Intervention Supervision	4,269,953		4,055,374			4,055,374
47	#777 - DOC Sentencing Alternatives	700,143		700,143	700,143		-
48							-
49	Department of Juvenile Justice						-
50	#1186 - 1197 - County Share Predisposed Detention	77,819,360	71,309,403	74,009,403	73,909,403		100,000
51	#1192 - Fiscally Constrained County Detention Center Costs Grant	4,632,618	3,883,853	3,883,853	3,883,853		-
52							-
53	Florida Department of Law Enforcement						-
54	#1297C - Community and Statewide Drug Abuse Prevention Program	4,497,908		4,497,908	409,227		4,088,681
55	#1293 - Criminal Investigations - Aid to Local Crime Labs	3,120,793	3,120,793	3,120,793	3,120,793		-
56							-
57	Section 5 - Nat. Resources / Env. / GM / Trans.						-
58	Department of Agriculture, Consumer Services, & Commerce						-
59	#1432 - State Forest Receipts	595,000	595,000	595,000	595,000		-
60	#1467 - Deep Water Horizon	9,842,667	1,750,863	2,630,943	2,630,943		-
61	#1471 - Mosquito Control	1,293,368	1,293,368	1,293,368	2,160,000		(866,632)
62							-
63	Department of Community Affairs						-
64	EM - Local Emergency Management Facilities	-					-
65							-
66	Department of Environmental Protection						-
67	#1586 - Payment in Lieu of Taxes Florida Forever	1,360,000	1,360,000	1,360,000	1,360,000		-
68							-
69	#1645 - Everglades Restoration	29,955,500	40,000,000	30,000,000			30,000,000
70	#1662 - Total Maximum Daily Loads	10,385,000	7,892,250	6,385,000	7,892,250		(1,507,250)
71	#1669 - Beach Renourishment and Restoration	7,999,701	10,000,000		10,000,000		(10,000,000)
72	#1663,1684, - Nonpoint Source (NPS) Management Planning Grants	12,400,000	17,400,000	17,400,000	17,400,000		-
73	#1685 - Drinking Water Facility Revolving Loan Program	91,053,594	68,079,716	68,079,716	68,079,716		-
74	#1686 - Wastewater Treatment Facility Revolving Loan Program	164,346,724	131,820,672	131,820,672	131,820,672		-
75	#1687 - Small County Wastewater Treatment Grants	16,600,000	17,350,000	17,350,000	17,350,000		-
76	#1694-Storage Tank Compliance Verification	7,000,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	7,000,000		(2,500,000)
77	#1707-Local Government Cleanup Contracting	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	7,000,000		-
78	#1711 - Inland Protection Trust Fund	128,000,000	128,000,000	118,000,000	128,000,000		(10,000,000)
79	Title V Program Funding	2,237,012					-
80	Ambient Air Monitoring	600,000					-
81	#1755 - Motor Vehicle Registration Fees	7,325,936	7,325,936	7,325,936	7,325,936		-
82	#1756 - Asbestos Removal	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000		-
83	Florida Recreation Development Assistance	-					-

84	Alternative Water Supply	-				-
85						-
86	Department of Transportation					-
87	#1914- Transportation Disadvantaged Program	39,904,800	38,404,800	38,404,800	43,404,800	(5,000,000)
88	#1915 - Transportation Disadvantaged - Medicaid	65,486,126	65,486,126	65,486,126	65,486,126	-
89	#1917 - Aviation Development Grants	187,442,157	152,284,154	176,928,822	184,428,822	(7,500,000)
90	#1918 - Public Transportation Grants	343,572,957	416,766,987	204,218,691	211,615,984	(7,397,293)
91	#1920 - Seaport - Economic Development	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000	-
92	#1921 - Seaports Access Programs	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	-
93	#1922 - Seaports Grants	117,751,305	83,711,239	115,446,664	115,446,664	-
94	#1950 - Small County Road Assistance Program	10,000,000	25,141,950	25,685,535	25,685,535	-
95	#1951 - Small County Outreach Program	21,362,190	29,671,522	26,381,305	36,381,305	(10,000,000)
96	#1953 - County Transportation Programs	55,007,529	42,125,655	50,761,552	50,761,552	-
97	#1970 - Local Government Reimbursement Program	30,388,811	49,039,957	38,503,210	38,503,210	-
98						-
99	Section 6 - General Government					-
100	Administered Funds					-
101	Strengthening Domestic Security	94,303,313		40,688,745		40,688,745
102						-
103	Department of Economic Opportunity					-
104	#2252- Regional Workforce Boards	249,042,919	236,045,648	236,045,648	236,349,445	(303,797)
105	School Readiness Services	616,762,636				-
106	#2284A - Regional Planning Councils	2,500,000		2,500,000	2,500,000	-
107	#2286A - Rural Community Development	1,170,000		1,170,000		1,170,000
108	#2287 - Technical and Planning Assistance	1,079,994	500,000	500,000	500,000	-
109	#2299 - Community Development Block Grants	34,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000	30,000,000	-
110	#2292 - Community Services Block Grants	17,876,599	17,876,599	17,876,599	21,876,498	(3,999,899)
111	#2293 - Home Energy Assistance	111,164,000	25,864,599	31,827,764	78,100,000	(46,272,236)
112	#2297 & 2298 - Weatherization	13,000,000		13,000,000	13,000,000	-
113	#2300 - HFC - Affordable Housing Programs	-	29,650,000		10,000,000	(10,000,000)
114	#2309 - Economic Development Programs	136,500,000	129,910,000	83,000,000		83,000,000
115	#2311 - Visit Florida	34,899,209	34,899,209	54,000,000	39,899,209	14,100,791
116	#2314 - Economic Development Tools	21,750,000	100,000,000		36,500,000	(36,500,000)
117	#2314B - Rural Infrastructure	1,581,244		1,500,000		1,500,000
118	#2315 - Economic Development Transportation Projects	15,000,000	15,000,000	15,000,000		15,000,000
119						-
120	Executive Office of the Governor					-
121	#2579 - Disaster Preparedness Planning and Admin	2,389,944	2,389,944	2,389,944	5,521,802	(3,131,858)
122	Federal EMPG to Counties	6,338,361				-
123	#2594 - Emergency Management Programs	7,089,061	7,089,061	7,089,061	7,089,061	-
124	#2596 - Repetitive Flood Claims	1,800,000	3,175,434	3,175,434	3,175,434	-
125	#2597 - Severe Repetitive Loss Pilot Program	4,500,000	1,253,434	1,253,738	1,253,738	-
126	#2602- Predisaster Mitigation	3,500,000	3,156,613	3,156,613	3,156,613	-
127	#2603 - Hurricane Loss Mitigation	6,892,389	6,892,389	6,892,389	6,892,389	-
128	#2604 - Flood Mitigation Assistance Program	4,000,000	3,670,670	3,670,670	3,670,670	-
129	#2624 - Local Emergency Management Critical Facilities	8,000,000	3,000,000	8,000,000	3,000,000	5,000,000
130						-
131	Department of Management Services					-
132	#2872 - Wireless 911 Distribution to Counties	70,190,273	70,190,273	70,020,273	70,020,273	-
133	#2873- Wireless 911 Distribution to Providers	15,484,846	15,484,846	15,484,846	15,484,846	-
134	#2874 - Non Wireless 911 Distribution to Counties	50,030,674	50,030,674	50,030,674	50,030,674	-
135						-
136	Department of Revenue					-
137	#3053 - Fiscally Constrained Offset (Amendment 4)	537,260	500,000	537,260		537,260
138	#3054 - Fiscally Constrained Offset (Amendment 1)	25,000,000	25,000,000	25,800,000		25,800,000
139	#2884 - Emergency Distribution From Local Gov. 1/2 Cent (Small Counties)	16,367,042	16,167,042	16,307,042		16,307,042
140	#2885 - Inmate Supplemental Distribution From Local Gov. 1/2 Cent	592,958	592,958	592,958	1,122,200	(529,242)
141						-
142	Department of State					-
143	#3124- Special Election Reimbursement	1,600,000	2,500,600	1,200,000	2,500,600	(1,300,600)
144	#3127 - Voting System Assistance	525,000	525,000	525,000	525,000	-
145	#3128 - Statewide Voter Registration System - HAVA	2,794,815	2,787,751	2,787,751	2,787,751	-
146	#3134 - Federal Election Activities - HAVA	2,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	-
147	#3143 - Historic Preservation Grants	1,218,250	118,250	661,850	4,042,155	(3,380,305)
148	Library Cooperatives	1,000,000		1,200,000		1,200,000
149	#3163 - Aid to Libraries	24,092,039	24,092,039	23,700,606	24,092,039	(391,433)
150	#3173 - Arts Grants	297,200	297,200	297,200	297,200	-
151	Cultural and Museum Grants	2,150,000		3,025,000		3,025,000
152						-
153	Section 7 - Judicial Branch					-
154	State Court System					-
155	#3219- Traffic Hearing Officers	1,339,864	1,339,864	1,339,864	1,339,864	-
156	#3229 - Drug Courts	12,483,000	10,685,523	10,685,523	6,485,523	4,200,000

This week the Senate passed out SB 2000, \$71.2 billion including Reserves of about \$2 billion. The budget is about \$1.5 billion larger than the House's plan. The conference process will commence next week.

Medicaid

By: County Staff and Akerman Senterfitt

SB 1988, the conforming bill changing the formula by which AHCA calculates the County Contribution to Medicaid rates for Nursing home resulting in a greater contribution by the County passed the Senate 31-5 on Thursday. The legislation would require counties to pay over three years, 85% of disputed past Medicaid bills to the state. In Palm Beach County, this amounts to just over \$10 million. In addition, the legislation requires counties, going forward, to pay Medicaid bills in advance and then petition the state to receive refunds from disputed claims that are verified as valid by the state. The fiscal mechanism for doing this would be an overall reduction of County revenue sharing. The House does not include any measures that would require this billing structure; however since it is in a budget conforming bill, this will become a budget conference issue. Overall, the bill would create about a \$70 million unfunded mandate to County governments.

Department of Health Reorganization

By: County Staff and Akerman Senterfitt

Earlier this week, the House Appropriations Committee heard and passed **HB 1263** by Rep. Hudson by a vote of 12-8. It was amended to remove the provision that would have decentralized County Health Departments. However, the bill still requires the Department of Health to develop and implement a transition plan for the closure of A.G. Holley State Tuberculosis Hospital in Lantana, one of four TB hospitals in the country, by January 1, 2013.

SB 1824 by Sen. Garcia was placed on the Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability agenda for Wednesday but was not heard.

Online Travel Companies

by: Foley & Lardner and Ericks Consultants

Rep. Brodeur's Online Travel bill, HB 1393 was temporarily postponed in House Finance & Tax Committee this week and for the third time this Session. Neither this nor the Senate bill has been heard in their first committee of reference so far this Session. It is expected the bill will come up again next week.

Transportation

By: County Staff, Corcoran, Johnston & Blair and The Moya Group

HB 1399 by Brandes passed favorably out of the House Economic Affairs late this week.

The Senate version, SB 1866 by Senator Latvala, was recalled from the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism & Economic Development. It is on the agenda for the Senate Budget Committee on Tuesday, February 28th.

One of the County's priorities in this transportation package was impacted by an amendment to HB1399:

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

Rep. Horner offered an amendment that offers a compromise to the composition of the SFRTA. The amendment passed and would increase the SFRTA from nine (9) members to eleven (11) plus an addition of an ex-officio member – the representative from the FDOT. Each of the three counties that make up the SFRTA would still appoint one Commissioner and one Community representative for a total of six (6) and the Governor would appoint the remaining five (5). Furthermore, the amendment allows for the expansion into Monroe, Martin and/or St. Lucie counties under the following conditions: (1) approval by resolution of the current members of the SFRTA, (2) approval by the County Commission affected by the proposed expansion, and (3) final approval by the Florida Department of Transportation. Expansions into counties could only be conducted in a year when federal reauthorization legislation for transportation funds is enacted.

Neither bill made any changes to the following issues that were included in last week's update:

Background Checks

The Senate bill contains provisions requiring background checks for vehicles for hire drivers.

School Signage

The House bill contains a provision extending the Palm Beach County and School Board local school sign project.

Local Option Fuel Tax

Both the House and Senate bills contain provisions allowing for the use of LOFT dollars for repair and maintenance of signalization on roads.

Bus Bench Issue

We continue to work with sponsors of the bill on language regarding bus bench liability and ADA compliance issues.

Tax Related Legislation

Special Districts

By: The Moya Group

Senate Bill 192 by Senator Bennett was heard in the Senate Budget Committee this week. This legislation significantly amends statutory provisions relating to the dissolution and merger of special districts, both voluntarily and involuntarily. The legislation passed through Committee without any dissenting votes or negative testimony. The bill has been placed on the Calendar on 2nd reading.

Ad Valorem Taxation

By: The Moya Group and Ericks Consultants

These very contentious pieces of legislation by Senator Simmons, **SB 312** and **SB 314**, were scheduled to be heard in the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Finance & Tax Thursday morning; however, the bills were immediately TP'd (temporarily postponed) by the Chairman once the meeting began. This Committee is scheduled to meet again on February 28th. The agenda for this meeting is not yet available. The bills would rescind Joint Resolution 381 from last session that would ask the voters to cap non-homestead property assessments to 5% each year. The bills would create a supersized homestead exemption in its place.

The bills are likely dead this year as time is running out. In the House, a similar measure died in the Community and Military Affairs Subcommittee at the beginning of the month.

Additional Ad Valorem Tax Exemption for Deployed Service-members

By: The Moya Group

HB 7113 by the House Finance & Tax Committee makes changes to the designated operations for which deployed service-members may qualify for an ad valorem tax exemption. This legislation was passed on the House floor this week with 114-0 vote.

Tangible Personal Property Taxes (TPPT)

By: County Staff

This week, **SB 1062** and **SJR 1064** by Sen. Detert were heard by the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Finance & Tax. SJR 1064 was amended to include language that would provide for an additional exemption of TPP for values assessed up to \$50,000. It also permits a county or municipality to allow for additional TPP tax exemptions by ordinance. This language brings SJR 1064

more in line with **HJR 1003** by Rep. Eisnaugle. SB 1062 was written as a precaution should an implementing bill be necessary.

The Florida Association of Counties (FAC), Florida League of Cities, Manufacturers Association of Florida and Florida Chamber Small Business Council all spoke in support of this legislation. FAC and FL League of Cities stated that they worked with the Governor's Office as well as the sponsors of the legislation to construct language that would work for everyone. This legislation will affect 49 percent or approximately 150,000 small businesses to make it more affordable to own and run a small business.

On Wednesday, HJR 1003 was temporarily postponed while on Special Order in the House. SJR 1064's next stop is the Senate Budget Committee.

Communications Services Tax

By: County Staff

An amended version of **HB 809** passed the House this week. 115-0. Instead of revamping the Communications Services Tax (CST) this year, Rep. Clemens offered an amendment to establish a CST working group consisting of 11 members. The goal is to review tax policies from all around the country to find a sound policy that will work for Florida. FAC and the Florida League of Cities supported this strike-all amendment. FAC stated that technology has outpaced the law and that's why revising those policies is a good thing.

Similar legislation in the Senate was discussed recently at a Revenue Estimating Conference (REC). After the REC, Senator Bogdanoff withdrew an amendment she had filed to the bill because the REC concluded that there is currently an indeterminate fiscal impact and estimated the impact to be anywhere from \$16.25M to \$47M. It would be a substantial negative impact to cities and counties, and there's not enough time for an appropriate determination of fiscal. Therefore, a strike-all amendment passed 4-0 by the Budget Subcommittee on Finance & Tax this week that matches the House language in terms of creating a CST working group. The bill's next stop is the Senate Budget Committee.

Back to School Sales Tax Break - SB 982 and HB 737

By: Ericks Consultants

This year's sales tax break on school items under \$75 will run from August 3, 2012 through August 5, 2012.

The Senate bill passed through the Finance and Tax Subcommittee and is headed to the full Budget Committee. The House Bill passed the full House this week and is awaiting passage of the Senate Bill.

Florida Retirement System (FRS)

By: County Staff, Ericks Consultants, and Corcoran, Johnston & Blair

On Wednesday, **SB 1334** by Sen. Oelrich was temporarily postponed in the Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee. Likewise, on Friday, **HB 525** was temporarily postponed in the House State Affairs Committee. These bills would have revised the Florida Retirement System by changing some of the terms that passed in last year's FRS overhaul, including service years requirements for Special Risk Class members. We don't expect these bills to come back up this year.

The bill would roll back the retirement age for the "special risk class," but the bill would also automatically enroll new hires into 401k style plans. There is still a measure moving through the process SB 2024 that keeps certain provisions alive, so any changes to the FRS will need to take place through that vehicle.

Red Light Cameras

By: County Staff and Ericks Consultants

On Wednesday, **HB 4177** by Rep. Plakon was temporarily postponed in the House Economic Affairs Committee. Rep. Waldman made a motion during Committee to lay the bill on the table, or in other words to ensure that it can no longer be brought up in Committee, but the motion failed. Its Senate companion, **SB 1542** by Sen. Evers has not been placed on any Committee agenda, and therefore, we don't expect either bill to move any further. Both of these bills would have repealed the Red Light Camera legislation that passed two years ago.

While there may be some more meetings of the House committee in the future, there is little appetite in the Senate to completely prohibit the use of cameras. There are other tweaks moving through the process, such as yellow light timing and right turn on red updates.

Wage Protection for Employees - SB 862 and HB 609

By: Ericks Consultants

This bill would prohibit local governments from enacting laws relating to wage theft. The bill specifically preempts any such laws to the state. The bill was filed to give the state a uniform wage theft law as currently Miami-Dade has a local code. Supporters of the bill state that there could be 67 different laws from 67 different counties. The opponents argue that this bill is vague and really doesn't address the protection of wages.

The committee postponed the Senate bill as it ran out of time during debate. The House Bill passed the Judiciary Committee and is ready for the full House floor.

Preference in Award of State Contracts - SB 1460

By: Ericks Consultants

A measure opposed by local governments was postponed in the Senate Governmental Operations Committee. The bill would have preempted preference ordinances and mandated certain contracts be awarded based upon state law. The sponsor postponed the measure and it is likely dead for the session.

The House measure, HB 673, has moved to its last stop: State Affairs Committee but is unlikely to move as the Senate measure seems dead.

Term Limits/ County Officers - HB 785

By: Ericks Consultants and Corcoran, Johnston & Blair

This HJR proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to authorize the imposition of term limits on county commissioners when provided for by county charter. The bill passed the full House unanimously. The Senate companion, **SB 1070**, is still in the Judiciary Committee.

Local Bills

By: County Staff

Acme Improvement District and Lake Worth Drainage District

On Wednesday, the House Economic Affairs Committee heard and unanimously passed HB 1255 by Rep. Abruzzo. This legislation was amended to remove the transfer of the "Strazzulla property" from Acme to LWDD. The bill now only transfers the "Wellington Medical Arts District" from LWDD to Acme. It is now ready to be heard by the full House.

Palm Beach County

Board of County

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Steven Abrams, Vice Chair

Karen T. Marcus

Paulette Burdick

Burt Aaronson

Jess R. Santamaria

Priscilla A. Taylor

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West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority

Both the House Finance & Tax and Economic Affairs Committees heard and unanimously passed HB 1381 by Rep. Clemens. It removes a parcel of land known as One Watermark Condominium from the boundaries of the DDA. It, too, is now ready to be heard by the full House.

Most of the local bills will be brought up on next Tuesday, February 28th.

FEDERAL UPDATE

Federal Update

By: Becker & Poliakoff

THE HOUSE: is in recess this week. Last week, the House passed the PIONEERS Act requiring the Administration to move forward with new offshore energy production in areas with the most oil and gas resources. The legislation also requires the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to approve the Keystone Pipeline project within 30 days of enactment.

Last Friday, the House passed the Conference Report to H.R. 3630, the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, by a vote of 293-132. This legislation extends the payroll tax holiday through December 31, 2012, eliminates the 27.4% cut to doctors who treat Medicare patients, and extends current payment rates through 2012.

THE SENATE: is also in recess this week. Last week, the Senate voted 60-36 to approve the payroll tax cut extension package on Friday, clearing the bill shortly after the House passed the measure Friday morning. The conference report now goes to President Barack Obama for his signature.

On Friday of last week, the Senate rejected by a vote of 54-42 a cloture motion on an amendment for a two-year, \$109 billion surface transportation bill (S 1813). Sixty votes were needed to limit begin debate on the legislation. The amendment includes language from the Finance Committee regarding revenues; from the Commerce, Science and Transportation panel regarding safety; and from Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee regarding public transit. Work on the highway bill is expected to resume after the Presidents Day recess.

THE WHITE HOUSE: This Thursday, President Obama traveled to Miami and Orlando, Florida, to participate in several official and campaign related events.