

PBC Legislative Update



JANUARY 17, 2019

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FEDERAL ISSUES

This Week in Washington

By: Thorn Run Partners

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are remaining steadfast in their respective positions on the partial government shutdown as a deal to fund the shuttered departments and agencies remains elusive. After passing the Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) funding bill yesterday, House Democrats have queued up a pair of measures ([H.R. 265](#); [H.R. 267](#)) that would fund the Departments of Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and Transportation as well as several independent agencies including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). While it was thought that dozens of House GOP lawmakers would join the majority's effort to reopen the government, but only eight Republican lawmakers joined Democrats in voting for the FSGG bill.

Meanwhile, Senators remain stuck on consideration of a middle east policy bill ([S.1](#)) as Senate Democrats have signaled they are prepared to block future legislative items so long as parts of the federal government remain shuttered. It remains unlikely that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell will allow a vote on these spending bills without Presidential support.

STATE ISSUES

Florida Interim Committee Week 2:

By: County Staff, Ericks Consulting

Governor DeSantis Inauguration

On Tuesday, January 8, Ron DeSantis was sworn in as the 46th governor of Florida. Governor DeSantis praised his predecessor for laying a sound economic groundwork that he hopes to continue.

The Governor also spoke about protecting the environment, stating:

“For Florida, the quality of our water and environmental surroundings are foundational to our prosperity as a state – it doesn’t just drive tourism; it affects property values, anchors many local economies and is central to our quality of life. The water is part and parcel of Florida’s DNA. Protecting it is the smart thing to do; it’s also the right thing to do.”

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Governor DeSantis has issued 13 executive orders, including Executive Order 19-12: Achieving More Now for Florida's Environment. The order fulfills a campaign promise to begin addressing Florida's water crisis on day one of his administration. The order includes measures to address Lake Okeechobee, Red Tide, Everglades Restoration, Blue-Green Algae, Water Supply, Apalachicola Bay, Sea Level Rise/Vulnerable Coastlines, Banning Fracking and Offshore Drilling, and Septic Tanks. It also creates a structure that bases Florida's environmental agencies and policies on transparent, scientific data. Just some of the order includes:

- a directive to secure \$2.5 billion over four years for Everglades Restoration and protection of water resources
- establishes Blue-Green Algae Task Force
- expedites the Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir and other key Everglades Restoration projects
- directs DEP to establish septic conversion and remediation grant program for local governments
- directs engagement with local governments, universities, industry and other stakeholders to research all viable alternative water sources and fund a recurring water supply grant program
- directs engagement with local governments, industry and other stakeholders for education and outreach on implementing conservation and reuse efforts
- creates the Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency to coordinate and ensure agency actions align with environmental needs
- creates the position of Chief Science Officer
- creates the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection
- direction to take necessary actions to adamantly oppose offshore drilling and hydraulic fracturing in Florida

The Legislature

The Legislature held a number of initial committee meetings but most were brief introductory meetings that merely presented an overview of committee jurisdictions, below you will find some highlights from the week.

The Opioid Epidemic

The Senate Health Policy Committee, chaired and vice-chaired by Palm Beach County Delegation members Senator Harrell and Senator Berman met on Monday to hear three open government bills, and receive a presentation by the Department of Health (DHS) on the Opioid Epidemic and Response.

The DHS laid out their opioid framework which includes four key strategies

- Monitoring and Surveillance
- Prevention and Education
- Reduce and Manage Access
- Treatment and Recovery

These strategies will play into the state's health improvement plan, which has two goals:

- Decrease the number of newborns experiencing neonatal abstinence syndrome
- Reduce the number of opioid overdose deaths among individuals with opioid use disorders

[View committee packet for full presentation](#)

Juvenile Civil Citation and Direct File

The House Criminal Justice Subcommittee convened on January 9, to hear a presentation given by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) on Prearrest Diversion Programs and Direct File. Currently, prearrest programs have a 96% success rate, and a 62% of statewide utilization. The DJJ in partnership with FSU examined data that found juveniles that received a civil citation were less likely to be rearrested than juveniles who received an arrest, even though the reduced likelihood of arrest decreased with progressively later follow up periods.

The DJJ also did an overview on transfer to adult court, 98% of cases transferred to adult court in Florida are the result of direct file action. The DJJ also found that there has been a 62% reduction in youth transferred to adult courts since 2011.

[View committee packet for full presentation](#)

Hurricane Recovery

Senate Community Affairs and Senate Environment and Natural Resources looked at impacts of Hurricane Michael and recovery progress and recommendations. Senate Community Affairs looked at the importance of building code standards and need strengthen the code for areas that are not as stringent as other parts of the state. The Committee also heard from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation on housing recovery efforts and displacement. Senate Environment and Natural Resources looked specifically at hurricane impacts on the agriculture industry, including damage to the state's timber industry, and to public and private land.

[Community Affairs Meeting Packet](#)

[Environmental and Natural Resources Meeting Packet](#)

Agriculture, Environment, and General Government

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment and General Government heard a presentation on nutrient loads caused by septic tanks as a component of the blue-green algae blooms happening in the state.

[View committee packet for full presentation](#)

Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee

The House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee heard presentations from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Consumer Services on the overview of the Springs and Aquifer Protection Act.

DEP also gave a presentation on Comprehensive Everglades Restoration, detailing projects and covering the Five Year Plan which includes:

- Finish East and West Storage
- Rehabilitate the Herbert Hoover Dike
- Uncork Tamiami Trail
- Restore Kissimmee Lakes and Rivers
- Authorize Northern Storage
- Start EAA Reservoir

[View committee packet for full presentation](#)