

PBC Legislative Update



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IN THIS ISSUE:

*Legislative Update –
Fourth Week of Session*

STATE ISSUES

1. *Constrained Agricultural Areas*
2. *Uber*
3. *Appropriations*
4. *Env Approps*
5. *House Tax Cuts*
6. *Commercial Lease Tax Cut*
7. *Property Tax Ex*
8. *FRS Contributions*
9. *Mental Health and Substance Abuse*
10. *DJJ*
11. *Enterprise Zones*
12. *Kratom*
13. *Hazardous Walking*
14. *Gleaning*
15. *Homelessness*
16. *Red Lights*
17. *Regional Planning Councils*
18. *Gaming*
19. *Location of Utilities*
20. *Preemption Local Gov Preferences*
21. *Public Works Const. Preemption*
22. *Lobbyist Gift Ban*
23. *Membership Assoc. Pub Funds*
24. *Reduced Park Fee*
25. *Grandparent Rights*
26. *Civil Citations*
27. *Sober Homes*
28. *WPB Pension*
29. *School Board Business Partners*
30. *WPB Water Catchment Bill*

FEDERAL ISSUES

1. *This Week in DC*

**UP NEXT WEEK IN
TALLAHASSEE**

Legislative Update—Fourth Week of Session

STATE ISSUES

CONSTRAINED AGRICULTURAL AREAS

By: Ericks Consultants and Corcoran & Johnston

The House Economic Development & Tourism Subcommittee approved along party lines HB 933, which combined nine individual growth management bills into one omnibus package. The bill includes legislation on Regional Planning Councils, the DRI process, Connected City Corridors, impact fees, conservation easements, private property rights and more. The bill has several provisions of concern to local governments, including provisions that would allow certain developers who own parcels of land that fit a specific definition of "constrained agricultural parcels" to subvert the local government planning process, would require local governments to include an element to "protect private property rights" in its comprehensive plan, limits mobility and impact fees for transportation and public education facilities under certain conditions and would require a majority vote of a local government to be able to charge for vegetation removal within the right-of-way from a developer who already contributed proportionate share. The sponsor stated that there would be significant changes to the bill as it moved forward. The bill has two more committees in the House. Several different Senate bills contain companion language. Groups opposing the bill included Florida Association of Counties, the Florida League of Cities, 1000 Friends of Florida and Sierra Club Florida, The Florida Bankers Association, Palm Beach County and Alachua County.

UBER

By: Ericks Consultants and County Staff

House Economic Affairs voted 13-4 to preempt local regulation of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft. The committee heard testimony and debate on insurance, background checks and home rule authority issues but mostly agreed that the bill was necessary to provide a predictable environment for businesses. HB 817 is now ready to go before the full House. Its Senate companion has not yet been heard in its first of three committees of reference. Meanwhile, Senate Banking & Insurance unanimously approved SB 1298 to require insurance for TNCs and Vacation Rental companies.

The proposal, which must still clear two additional committees and has yet to be heard in the House, would establish coverage requirements for when a customer is in a vehicle and during an "on call" period, considered a coverage "gap," between when a driver is notified about a customer to pick up and the time the passenger gets in the vehicle.

Under Simmons' proposal, which must still get through the Senate Judiciary and Appropriations committees, the driver or company would be required to have liability coverage of at least \$125,000 for death and bodily injury, at least \$50,000 for property damage, and at least \$250,000 in uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage.

When a passenger is in the vehicle --- the ride-acceptance period --- the coverage would need to be at \$1 million for death, bodily injury and property damage, and \$1 million in uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage, under Simmons' bill.

Currently, the majority of taxi and limousine regulation in Florida is controlled by local governments.

Florida law requires limousines and taxis to maintain motor-vehicle liability policies with minimum limits of \$125,000 per person for bodily injury, up to \$250,000 per incident for bodily injury and \$50,000 for property damage.

APPROPRIATIONS

By: County Staff, Ericks Consultants, and Ron L. Book PA

The Senate and House Appropriations Committees voted to approve the initial budgets of their respective Chambers. There is a \$4 billion gap between the two Chambers as well as significant differences in accounting for hospital funding. The Senate budget is approximately \$80.4 billion, and the House budget totals just under \$76.2 billion. The Senate Appropriations warned that luxuries such as tax cut packages and member projects could fall victim to Federal negotiations on hospital funding, while the House feels confident that those dollars will be available. The Senate also discussed Amendment 1 during a debate on an amendment to increase land acquisition funding, which was ultimately withdrawn. The committee wrestled with what fulfillment of the true will of the voters would actually look like, while some members showed clear disdain for the Amendment. The Chambers each expect to pass their legislation on Amendment 1 implementation next week.

Below are some of the highlights of local items important to Palm Beach County:

BUDGET ITEM TED APPROPS	REQUEST	HOUSE LINE ITEM #	HOUSE ALLOCATION (\$)	SENATE LINE ITEM #	SENATE ALLOCATION (\$)
TORRY ISLAND	75,000				
GLADES ROADS	1,000,000			1927	1,000,000
SMALL CITY TRANSPORTATION FUND s. 288.0656(7)	9,000,000			1911	9,000,000
BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB	1,000,000				
SADOWSKI TRUST FUND	PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDS			2240 2241	256,000,000
LIBRARY	27,409,823			3106	22,298,834 (GR) 2,150,606 (TF)
LIBRARY COOPERATIVE	2,000,000	3105	1,700,000	3105	2,000,000
CULTURAL AND MUSEUMS GRANTS		3118	10,977,000	3118	5,000,000
CULTURAL PROJECTS		3123A	18,839,581	3123A	13,341,874
CULTURAL ENDOWMENTS		3118A	1,920,000	3118A	960,000
WPB- BROADWAY					
LW PARK OF COMMERCE	7,500,000			1927	2,500,000
NORTON MUSEUM	2,000,000	3123A	155,000	3123A	1,000,000

SPADY MUSEUM					
PAHOKEE MARINA	1,300,000			2233A	1,300,000
PAHOKEE MARINA - FEMA	200,000			2567	107,321
LAKE O SCENIC TRAIL	1,000,000				
GATEWAY REDEVELOPMENT ROADWAY	506,000			1927	506,000
VILLAGE OF TEQUESTA TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES				1927	200,000

BUDGET ITEM ED APPROPS	REQUEST	HOUSE LINE ITEM #	HOUSE ALLOCATION (\$)	SENATE LINE ITEM #	SENATE ALLOCATION (\$)
WESTTECH	1,471,714			106	1,400,000
INLAND PORT ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE - SOUTH BAY	470,900			2249A PROVISO	470,900
MAX PLANCK	2,000,000	138	500,000		
FAU TECH RUNWAY	3,000,000	2249A	3,000,000	2249B	1,000,000
FAU MED SCHOOL		145	22,609,894 GR: 14,337,889 TRUST FUND: 8,272,005		22,161,778 GR: 13,889,773; TRUST FUND: 8,272,005
FAU JUPITER BIOSCIENCE GATEWAY		138	400,000		\$7,038,000
FAU JUPITER RESEARCH BUILDING RENOVATION	29,000,000	21	14,650,000		
PBSC LOX CAMPUS	9,000,000	20	2,004,182		
STEM FUNDING		99	\$4,000,000	99	\$4,000,000

BUDGET ITEM GG APPROPS	REQUEST	HOUSE LINE ITEM #	HOUSE ALLOCATION (\$)	SENATE LINE ITEM #	SENATE ALLOCATION (\$)
WATER PROJECTS			80,589,000		0
GLADES REGION WATER INFRASTRUCTURE	3,000,000		PROVISO PENDING		
LW LAGOON	3,300,000		PROVISO PENDING		
FRESHWATER LAKE RESTORATION	165,000		PROVISO PENDING		
BEACH & INLET FUND	29,346,860		40,000,000	1647	25,000,000
-CORAL COVE PARK DUNE RESTORATION	425k				

- JUPITER/CARLIN SHORE PROTECTION	100k	1647	100k		
-JUNO BEACH SHORE PROTECTION	8,875				
-CENTRAL PBC EROSION CONTROL	172k				
-SOUTH LW INLET MGMT	55,663				
-OCEAN RIDGE SHORE PROTECTION	51,300	1647	51,300		
-BOCA RATON NORTH BEACH SHORE PROTECTION	234,700	1647	233,650— 106,150; 127,500 FOR MONITORING		
-BOCA RATON CENTRAL BEACH SHORE PROTECTION	3,908,900		1.7M		
-BOCA RATON SOUTH BEACH SHORE PROTECTION	886,400		820,375		
-BOCA RATON INLET	384,300	1647	384.3k		
-LW INLET MAINTENANCE DREDGING	46,500	1647	46.5k		
-MIDTOWN BEACH RESTORATION	7,487,604				
-PHIPPS PARK RESTORATION	6,851,793				
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER INITIATIVE	2,186,785		PROVISO PENDING		
EVERGLADES RESTORATION	SUPPORT 100M APPROPRIATION REQUEST	1621	132M; 100M FROM SAVE OUR EVERGLADES TRUST; 32M FROM LAND ACQ TRUST FUND	1620- 1621	79,000,000
FRDAP		1711A	29,020,591	1711- 1712	7,000,000
CORBETT DIKE	4,000,000				

BUDGET ITEM CJ APPROPS	REQUEST	HOUSE LINE ITEM#	HOUSE ALLOCATION (\$)	SENATE LINE ITEM #	SENATE ALLOCATION (\$)
SHARED DETENTION COST SPLIT	50/50 WITH PARTIAL PAYBACK		57 - COUNTY 43 - STATE		60 - COUNTY 40 - STATE
LIGHTING IN HIGH CRIME AREAS	200,000				

OFFICE FURNITURE, STATE ATTORNEY (CIRCUIT 15)	76,006				76,006
PROSECUTION OF PIP FRAUD		908 2424	1,559,239	2424	1,559,239
CONSTRUCTION 4 TH DCA BUILDING	16,784,446	3160	6,508,689	3160	16,784,446
SOUTH BAY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY		715	2,908,779	715	5,050,143
SAGO PALM WORK CAMP		715	1,473,375	715	1,473,375

BUDGET ITEM HHS APPROPS	REQUEST	HOUSE LINE ITEM#	HOUSE ALLOCATION (\$)	SENATE LINE ITEM #	SENATE ALLOCATION (\$)
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED		1868	50,783,704	1868	52,783,704
JEROME GOLDEN 12-BED FACILITY	575,000	377L	575,000		
CHILDNET—CLOSE FOSTER FUNDING DEFICIT	3,200,000				
COMMUNITY BASED CHILD WELFARE RISK POOL	5,000,000	308	13,000,000	308	13,000,000
EXTENDED FOSTER CARE					
ALZHEIMER'S COMMUNITY CARE	1,000,000	391	500,000		
CARIDAD CENTER	1,800,000				
PLACE OF HOPE	3,250,000				
RUTH & NORMAN RALES JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES	250,000				
ALPERT JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES	342,000				
SOUTH COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER	500,000				
SCRIPPS	5,000,000			2249A	1,000,000
PB HABILITATION CENTER FOR MENTALLY DISABLED	694,111	253A	649,111		649,111
PDMP		503	500,000		
PACE (MORSE) EXPANSION FOR ELDERLY		400	2,917,584		

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

By: Anfield

This week, after receiving allocations from their presiding officers, the House and Senate subcommittees released the "Chairman's" budget proposals for the upcoming fiscal year. There are significant differences between the chambers with

regard to the total funds dedicated to agriculture and natural resource management agencies. With respect to key environmental program and initiatives, the Chair's allocations are as follows:

Program	House	Senate
Florida Forever / Land Acquisition	\$205,000,000	\$ 22,000,000
Everglades Restoration	\$100,000,000	\$ 79,000,000
Everglades Restoration (Incl. IRL)	\$ 33,000,000	\$ 0
Northern Everglades, WQ & Estuaries Projects	\$ 20,167,551	\$ 3,000,000
Springs Protection	\$ 55,215,853	\$ 50,000,000
Alternative Water Supply	\$ 50,000,000	\$ 50,000,000
Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Program	\$ 95,863,107	\$ 88,422,307
Wastewater Revolving Loan Program	\$191,128,531	\$181,210,531
Small County Wastewater Treatment Grants	\$ 16,000,000	\$ 16,000,000
Total Maximum Daily Loads	\$ 9,385,000	\$ 9,385,000
DACS "Water Farming" Lake O. Basin	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 0
DACS BMP's Implementation	\$ 5,500,000	\$ 1,900,000
DACS Hybrid Wetland Treatment Program	\$ 6,200,000	\$ 0
Non-point Source Management	\$ 17,300,000	\$ 3,000,000
Keys Wastewater Treatment	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 0
Beach Restoration	\$ 40,000,000	\$ 25,000,000
Petroleum Tank Clean-up	\$110,000,000	\$110,000,000
Dry Cleaning Solvent Clean-up	\$ 6,500,000	\$ 6,500,000
Local Water Projects	\$ 80,589,000	\$ 0
Transfer to DOT for Trails	\$ 0	\$ 25,000,000

As summarized below, with respect to funds associated with the Land Acquisition and Management Trust Fund (**Amendment 1**), the chambers took different approaches towards the expenditure of the funds.

Agency	House	Senate
Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services	\$125,104,703	\$ 89,525,015
Department of Environmental Protection	\$505,316,871	\$504,006,631
Fish and Wildlife Commission	<u>\$ 98,975,597</u>	<u>\$120,662,794</u>
	\$729,397,171	\$714,154,400

Next week (5th week) both chambers will consider and amend these proposals on the floor of each chamber. Once each chamber approves their versions of the State budget they will be in a posture to commence budget conference (reconcile the difference) as soon as the presiding officers agree on allocations within each area of the budget. This is not anticipated to happen until week 7 at the earliest.

HOUSE TAX CUT PACKAGE

By: Ericks Consultants

The House Finance & Tax Committee unveiled its proposed \$690 million tax cut package at a press conference this week, entitled "#NoTaxIsSafe." The package holds local government harmless for the most part and includes provisions from several different standalone Senate bills. The Committee Chairman stated that the Florida House stands behind the package and that passing the package is a priority of the Speaker and the Governor. The package includes reducing CST- with a hold harmless provision for local governments, reducing the tax on commercial leases, exempting text books and agricultural equipment from sales tax, eliminating the school concessions tax and research & development tax, instituting Back to School and Small Business Saturday sales tax holidays and many others. The committee will vote on filing the package as a bill next week.

TAX ON COMMERCIAL LEASES

By: Ericks Consultants and Corcoran and Johnston

Senate Finance & Tax unanimously approved SB 140 that would reduce the 6% sales tax on renting and leasing commercial property by 1% in order to help small businesses. The bill sponsor stated that lowering the sales tax by 1% would have a positive effect on keeping businesses competitive with other states. Those that waived in support of the bill included: the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the Florida Retail Federation, the Florida Chamber, Lee Moffitt, the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, the Florida Realtor Association, Americans for Prosperity, and AIF. The Florida League of Cities stated its concerns on the bill's financial impact on local governments as well as concern that the bill was the beginning of a complete phase out of the tax. The bill has one more committee of reference in the Senate. Its House companion has not been heard in its first of three committees, however the newly unveiled House Tax Package contains a .2% cut in the tax. This would have an estimated impact on counties of \$3.66 million. SB 140 proposes to take a bigger cut by reducing the sales tax on commercial leases by 1 penny, from 6 cents to 5, producing an estimated negative annual impact to counties of \$18-\$20 million.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

By: Ericks Consultants

The House Local & Federal Affairs unanimously voted to update property tax exemptions for widows, widowers, blind persons and persons permanently disabled for the first time since the early 1900s. HB 173 would increase the exemption from \$500 to \$5,000. State economists estimated a \$41 million impact to local governments statewide. The exemption would not be implemented until 2016. The bill has one more committee of reference in the House and is also part of the House Tax Cut Package. It does not have a Senate companion.

FRS CONTRIBUTIONS

By: Ericks Consultants

Senate Appropriations unanimously approved SB 7038 that would increase employer contribution rates to the Retiree Health Insurance Trust Fund from 1.26 to 1.58 for each employee in the FRS system. The increase would add an estimated \$99 million to the trust fund with a \$31 million impact to local governments. The bill now goes before the full Senate.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

By: Ericks Consultants and Corcoran and Johnston

House Children, Families & Seniors teamed up with House Judiciary on a mental health and substance abuse package. House Children, Families & Seniors unanimously voted to file the package as a bill. The package combines several different provisions from other mental health bills including crisis stabilization database, drug court reform, Baker Act, Marchman Act and more. It would also require managing entities to create regional coordinated care systems that would involve bidding on performance-based contracts as part of a plan to leverage more Federal Medicaid dollars for behavioral health. Meanwhile, Senate Appropriations also voted unanimously to file two bills with companion language. The bills have not received any committee references as of yet.

DJJ DETENTION COSTS

By: FAC and County Staff

This week County Commissioners & staff came to Tallahassee for the 2015 FAC Legislative Day and to advocate on behalf of home rule, FAC priorities and their local issues. When the House Appropriations Committee took up the juvenile detention cost share bill HB 5201, five commissioners from around the state testified they

opposed the bill in its current form but pledged their commitment to continue negotiations with the legislature in the hopes of obtaining a more equitable 50/50 cost split and a repayment schedule. While the bill sponsor Rep. Metz indicated that they were willing to consider a repayment, it was most important to fix the system moving forward. Despite objections, the bill passed the Appropriations Committee and is headed to the House floor.

ENTERPRISE ZONES

By: Ericks Consultants

Senate Finance & Tax held a brief second hearing on Enterprise Zone ideas in an effort to keep the discussion alive as extension of the program has failed to gain momentum. The committee was given a compilation of ideas from Florida Association of Counties, Florida League of Cities, Florida Tax Watch, Florida Economic Development Council and retail industry representatives on tools that could be used to replace the program should a reformed Enterprise Zone program not be on the table. The committee members expressed support for Enterprise Zones in the committee's first hearing on the topic citing examples of success in their local districts.

KRATOM

By: Lobbytools

(HB 287) by Rep. Kristen Jacobs, D-Coconut Creek, which originally added kratom to the list of Schedule I Controlled Substances, was amended by the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee to instead request a comprehensive study on whether to ban the drug.

The study would be led by the Attorney General's office in coordination with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Department of Children and Families' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program Office.

HAZARDOUS WALKING

By: Ericks Consultants

The House Education Appropriations Subcommittee unanimously approved HB 41 that would revise the process by which hazardous walking conditions for school children are identified and addressed by enhancing cooperation between the school district and local government. The committee adopted a Florida Association of Counties supported amendment that would allow local governments to use the interlocal agreement process so long as the process did not go below the safety standards set forth in the bill. The bill is now supported by local governments and school districts. The Senate and House bill each have one more committee stop, however the Senate bill has not yet been amended to allow for interlocal agreements.

GLEANING

By: Andfield Consultants, Ericks Consultants

The House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee unanimously approved a bill to reduce civil liability for farmers who gratuitously allow people onto their property to harvest excess food. The bill would still hold farmers liable for not warning about a known danger that would not be obvious to anyone entering the property. The bill has one more committee in the House. Its Senate companion, SB 158, was unanimously passed by a full vote of the Senate and is now in Messages.

HOMELESSNESS

By: Ericks Consultants

Senate Rules unanimously approved HB 552 to exempt identifying information

collected by a Point-In-Time count or contained in a Homeless Management Information System. The bill is now ready for the full Senate. Its House companion has two more committees of reference in the House.

RED LIGHT CAMERAS

By: Ericks Consultants

The House Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee voted 7-3 to approve HB 7071 that would add restrictions on local government red light camera programs. The bill would require notice of violations be sent via certified mail. It would require collection of crash data at intersections and require summaries of vendor contracts in annual reports submitted to DHSMV. It would allow DOT to inspect cameras for compliance and would require all local government revenue to only go towards public safety. The committee adopted an amendment, which removed a provision that banned the issuance of violations for right-on-red turns in an effort to not harm pedestrian safety. Opponents of the bill expressed concern that using certified mail would be an unfunded mandate on local governments operating the program. The bill has one more committee of reference in the House. It does not have a Senate companion, however the Senate DHSMV package contains different language involving red light camera restrictions.

GAMING

By: Ericks Consultants and Corcoran & Johnston

The House Regulatory Affairs held a workshop on gaming where it listened to presentations on Tribal Gaming Law as well as various legal and revenue impact scenarios depending on the different options the state has in Compact negotiations. The committee discussed gaming related legislation that has been filed, including greyhound decoupling and the House gaming package. The committee also heard from a slew of pari-mutuels asking for parity and sharing their business vision for gaming in the state as well as anti-gaming activists. The Chair of the committee stated the workshop was the "most anticipated non-event of the year."

LOCATION OF UTILITIES

By: Ericks Consultants

The Senate Community Affairs Committee voted 6-1 to approve SB 896 that negatively impacts counties and municipalities with regards to utility lines by requiring local governments to bear the cost of relocating utilities that are located in a valid public easement. The bill would also prohibit local governments from requesting proprietary maps from utilities and communications services companies if they have already been subject to a permit by the local government. The legislation is in response to a court case between the Lee County Electric Cooperative and the City of Cape Coral. The committee adopted a strike all that broadened from the original bill instances when the utility must bear the cost as well as specified the type of information local government was prohibited from requesting as the proprietary maps. The Florida Natural Gas, Comcast, CenturyLink, Florida Chamber, AIF, AT&T, Verizon, and Florida Telecommunications Association all support the bill. The Florida League of Cities and Florida Association of Counties reiterated that ratepayers should bear the costs rather than taxpayers. FLC also warned of a potential freeze in transportation projects. Committee members stated that the current system is a "hidden tax" on ratepayers. The bill has two more committee stops before going to the full Senate. Its House companion, which is not identical, has one more committee of reference before going to the full House.

PREEMPTION OF LOCAL PREFERENCE IN CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

By: Ericks Consultants

Senate Appropriations voted 10-5 to preempt local preference ordinances for construction projects that are funded 50% with state dollars. SB 778 is a top priority for the Florida Associated Builders and Contractors. Members who supported the bill

argued in favor of free markets and claimed that local preferences are discriminatory and force taxpayers to pay higher prices. The Florida League of Cities and Florida Association of Counties assert that local preferences are vital economic development tools. FLC also has concern with the open-ended definition of funding, which, as written, could mean loans. Labor interests also oppose the bill. The bill is now before the full Senate. Its House companion is in its final committee of reference.

PUBLIC WORKS CONSTRUCTION PREEMPTION

By: Ericks Consultants

A bill to preempt local control-including wage ordinances- over construction contracts for public works projects stalled in Senate Community Affairs this week. SB 934 died after the majority of the committee voted it down, however the bill sponsor made a procedural move, which allowed him to Temporarily Postpone it. The committee can reconsider the bill at any time. The committee amended the bill prior to the vote to establish a threshold of 20% of state funds used to cover the cost of the project in order to trigger the preemption. It would prohibit a public entity from requiring contractors, subcontractors or material suppliers submitting bids for public works projects to pay employees a certain wage, enter into labor agreements, provide certain benefits, hire employees from a designated source or participate in certain training programs. Public entities could also not require that the contractor, subcontractor or material supplier responding to a public works construction, maintenance or improvement bid be associated with any certain association, organization or union. It would also require all projects to improve or construct a public building that cost in excess of \$300,000 must be competitively bid. Labor interests, including the Florida Electrical Workers Association, Florida Building Trades Council, CWA Council of Florida, Florida State Council of Machinists and AFL-CIO and others combined forces with local governments to oppose the bill. The bill is supported by the Association of Builders and Contractors as well as the Association of General Contractors. The bill has one more committee in the House. Senate Community Affairs is its second of three committees in the Senate.

LOBBYIST GIFT BAN EXEMPTION FOR USE PUBLIC FACILITIES

By: Ericks Consultants

A bill that would exempt a Legislator's use of a public facility for a public purpose from the definition of "expenditures" under the lobbyist gift ban passed through its first House and Senate committees. The legislation would, for example, allow a Senator to use a municipal owned building for a public purpose regardless if the municipality is registered as a principal under the state's lobbying requirements. The bills each have two more committees of reference in the House and Senate.

MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATIONS THAT RECEIVE PUBLIC FUNDS

By: Ericks Consultants

House State Affairs voted 10-4 to prohibit membership associations whose membership includes elected or appointed public officials and whose budget is funded 25% or more by taxpayer dollars from entering into litigation against the state. HB 549 would also put transparency requirements on the associations, including a detailed report of membership dues, assets and liabilities, salaries of certain employees, benefits packages, and disbursements for lobbying and litigation to be sent to the Legislature annually. The bill excludes labor organizations. The bill is largely in response to current litigation by the Florida School Board Association against the state. The bill sponsors argued transparency requirements were comparable to that of a 990 form and that the bill did not preclude litigation but prevented the use of taxpayer dollars in litigation. The Florida League of Cities and opponents of the bill have concerns with restricting the right to litigation. The bill is now ready to go before the full House. Its Senate companion has one more committee of reference in the Senate.

REDUCED FEES FOR COUNTY & MUNICIPAL PARKS AND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES

By: Ericks Consultants

The House Local & Federal Affairs Committee unanimously passed HB 1095 which would require regional transportation authorities to offer partial or full discount on fares to disabled veterans as well as discounted entrance fees to military members, veterans, & spouses & parents of certain deceased military members, law enforcement officers, & firefighter. The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority supports the bill. The bill now goes before the full House. Its Senate companion moved unanimously through its first of three committees this week and is scheduled for its second committee next week.

GRANDPARENTS RIGHTS

By: Ericks Consultants

The House unanimously passed HB 149 that would give grandparents and great grandparents of deceased, vegetative state, and felon parents the right to petition the courts for visitation rights moved through its second of four Senate committees this week. The bill is supported by the Florida Retired Americans Association, Florida Coalition of Children, AARP, Grandparents as Parents of Florida and Palm Beach County. Meanwhile, its Senate companion moved through its second of four committees in the Senate this week.

CIVIL CITATIONS

By: County Staff

On Thursday, the Senate Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee unanimously passed SB 378 by Sen. Rene Garcia. This bill expands juvenile civil citations by allowing law enforcement to issue a civil citation to youth who have committed a second or subsequent misdemeanor. The bill also allows law enforcement, that makes contact with a juvenile who admits to having committed a misdemeanor, the discretion to issue a simple warning, inform the child's parent/guardian of the infraction, issue a civil citation or require participation in a similar diversion program. Civil citation is presently only available to youth who admit to committing a first-time misdemeanor.

SB 378 is now ready to be heard in its last committee of reference, Senate Rules. The House companion, HB 99 by Rep. Clarke-Reed, is on the House Justice Appropriations Subcommittee agenda for Monday, March 30th, its second to last committee of reference.

SOBER HOMES

By: Ericks Consultants and Ron L. Book, PA

Neither bill was heard this week. (SB 326 by Senator Clemens, HB 21 by Representative Hager) A proposed committee substitute was filed in the Senate this week that once passed, will make the bills virtually identical.

The legislation instructs DCF to approve a credentialing entity to develop and administer a voluntary certification program, including background checks for recovery residence operators. The bill would require DCF to publish a list of certified residences on its website.

CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH FIREFIGHTER PENSION

By: County Staff

On Tuesday, HB 1167 by Rep. Dave Kerner, a local bill that would amend the West Palm Beach Firefighter Pension Special Act, passed out of the House Government Operations Subcommittee by a unanimous vote. The changes made by this bill are the result of a collective bargaining agreement between the City of West Palm Beach and International Association of Firefighters Local 727. The bill defines "Fire Chief"

as the executive officer for the City of West Palm Beach Fire Department and provides the chief with modified pension benefits. This legislation also provides that a portion of the chapter 175 premium taxes must be used to reduce the employee contributions and the remainder must be allocated to the member share accounts.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PALM BEACH COUNTY BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

By: County Staff

On Tuesday, HB 1253 by Rep. Pat Rooney, a local bill that would establish the School District of Palm Beach County Business Partnership Program, passed out of the House K-12 Subcommittee by a unanimous vote. This bill removes the need for periodic renewal of the pilot program that was established by the Legislature in 2008. It would continue to allow schools in the unincorporated areas of Palm Beach County to recognize its business partners by displaying the names of the partners on school property. In return for having their names publicly displayed, the partners fund programs such as Project Graduation and extracurricular activities.

WEST PALM BEACH WATER CATCHMENT AREA LOCAL BILL

By: County Staff and Ericks Consultants

The House Local Government Affairs Subcommittee unanimously approved a local bill to revise the boundaries of the West Palm Beach Water Catchment area. This bill will help move forward plans for a new two-team spring training facility on land that was a former landfill in the City of West Palm Beach. The bill has one additional committee in the House. Local bills do not require Senate companions.

FEDERAL ISSUES

This Week In DC

By: Becker and Poliakoff

THE SENATE: Will consider a budget proposal separately from the House, possibly leading to the first joint congressional budget in six years. A vote on an amendment to the budget is expected by Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) seeking to tax offshore corporate earnings to raise the money for a \$478 billion infusion into highways and bridges. The budget approved by the Senate Budget Committee calls for \$5.1 trillion in spending cuts in order to balance in ten years. Most of the deficit reduction comes from \$4.2 trillion in cuts to entitlement programs and by holding defense spending to the caps in the 2011 Budget Control Act. An amendment being offered by Rep. Lindsay Graham (R-SC) would increase defense spending by \$38 billion in 2016. That amount matches the figure that House leaders plan to seek in their budget proposal by raising the uncapped war funding from President Obama's request of \$58 billion to \$96 billion.

Once the budget is adopted, the spending and revenue targets can be enforced and any member of the House or Senate can raise a point of order when a bill would exceed the targets. A point of order can be overridden by a simple majority or waived by the Rules Committee in the House but it takes 60 votes to waive the point of order in the Senate. When budget resolutions include directions known as "reconciliation instructions," committees are ordered to produce bills that would change laws to meet the budget targets. In the Senate, debate on reconciliation bills is limited to 20 hours, eliminating any possibility of a filibuster.

The Senate Transportation Subcommittee plans to take up a number of issues this week, including surface transportation reauthorization and drone and rail safety issues.

Members of President Obama's Cabinet, including Housing Secretary Julian Castro, Labor Secretary Thomas Perez, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, Treasury Secretary Jack Lew and Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz are scheduled to testify on policy or their agencies' budget requests. The Senate Commerce Surface

Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure Subcommittee plans a hearing on the performance of programs being authorized. Among those scheduled to testify is Transportation Undersecretary for Policy Peter Rogoff.

The Senate Homeland Security Committee plans a hearing on securing the border and assessing the impact of transnational crime.

The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee plans a hearing on a proposed EPA rule that would bring under federal jurisdiction more tributaries and wetlands.

THE HOUSE: Budget will include a proposal to partially privatize Medicare. Several complete budget alternatives will also be considered, including one by the Republican Study Committee reducing spending by \$7.1 trillion over ten years and balancing the budget in six years and a version by the minority Democrats proposing tax-policy changes.

The proposal passed by the House Budget Committee's proposal balances the budget in nine years by proposing \$5.5 trillion in spending cuts and no net tax increase. Domestic discretionary spending would be cut \$759 billion below the Budget Control Act cap. The budget assumes \$2 trillion in savings by repealing the Affordable Care Act and partially privatizing Medicare. The Budget Committee was unable to reach consensus on war funding levels, so House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) said the increase would be part of the rule for floor consideration. The rule setting terms of debate will add \$2 billion in war funding to bring it to a total of \$96 billion while removing a requirement that the funds be offset \$19.5 billion.

The House also may take up a bipartisan plan to change the way Medicare pays physicians and end the temporary "doc fix" patches that have been used to prevent painful cuts to doctors' reimbursements.

The House Judiciary Committee is slated to mark up a bill to streamline environmental permitting for major energy, manufacturing and infrastructure projects, along with other bills designed to roll back environmental and other federal regulations.

House Appropriations subcommittees plan to continue hearings on President Obama's fiscal 2016 budget request.

HUD Secretary Castro plans to testify before the Transportation-HUD Subcommittee.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler and Commissioner Ajit Pai are scheduled to testify before the Financial Services Subcommittee.

The House Energy and Commerce Environment and the Economy Subcommittee plans to examine coal-ash disposal legislation



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Commissioners

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Mary Lou Berger, Vice Mayor

Hal R. Valeche

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UP NEXT WEEK IN TALLAHSSEE:

Insurance Coverage for Emergency Services (amendment anticipated)

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0516/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Value Adjustment Boards

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0972/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Municipal Pension Reform

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/1279/BillText/c1/PDF>

Public Works Projects Preemption

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0934/BillText/c1/PDF>

Anchoring

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/1548/BillText/Filed/PDF>

First passage of Senate Amendment 1 Implementation expected

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0586/BillText/c2/PDF>

First passage of Public Records Exemption for Public Transit Fare Cards expected

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/7000/BillText/c1/PDF>

Land Application of Septage

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0648/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Brownfields

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/1302/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Civil Citations

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0099/BillText/c1/PDF>

Public Corruption Sentencing

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0732/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Mental Health

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/7119/BillText/Filed/PDF>

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0344/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Sector Plans

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0832/BillText/Filed/PDF>

Film and TV Incentives

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0451/BillText/c1/PDF>

Surtax for Fire Services

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0668/BillText/c1/PDF>

Private Property

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/0383/BillText/c2/PDF>

Texting and Driving

Fracking

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/1468/BillText/Filed/PDF>

TNC Insurance

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2015/1298/BillText/Filed/PDF>