

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA  
**LEGISLATIVE  
DAILY BRIEF**



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Monday was a relatively quiet day for the business community. The House Infrastructure, Economic Development, and Tourism & Trade committees held meetings this afternoon and each considered a long list of bills, only a handful of which were priorities for AIF.

In this report you will find information on Representative Mike Davis' omnibus bill on affordable housing, as well as a report on a much needed plan to implement a venture capital program for Florida's emerging businesses and technologies.

### **Workforce Housing**

The House Infrastructure Committee unanimously approved HB 1375 Relating to Affordable Housing by Representative Mike Davis (R-Naples). HB 1375 seeks to make improvements on last year's landmark affordable housing legislation that was also sponsored by Representative Davis. This year's bill contains many of the recommendations made by the House Workgroup on Affordable Housing, which met throughout last fall and was chaired by the bill's sponsor. HB 1375 contains several provisions that further encourage and incentivize the establishment of affordable housing such as:

- authorizing local governments to grant an exception to concurrency requirements for transportation facilities and to exempt certain trips from the concurrency requirement when considering proximity of affordable housing to employment centers;
- creating the Affordable Housing Property Tax Relief Initiative and providing criteria to be used in assessing just valuation of certain affordable housing properties serving extremely-low-, low-moderate-, and very-low-income persons, and requiring a rental income approach for assessment of specified affordable housing properties; and
- removing the pilot status of the Community Workforce Housing Innovation Program (CWHIP).

**AIF supports legislation that provides additional incentives for local governments to offer and support additional affordable housing projects. Florida's employers rely on the ability of their employees to find a place to live, preferably close to the jobsite. We are particularly encouraged to see specific provisions that address the proximity issue.**

## Economic Development

The House Economic Development Committee passed a series of bills dealing with venture capital and the commercialization of products developed through research efforts at Florida's universities. HB 1521 Relating to the Sure Ventures Program by Representative Gayle Harrell (R-Port St. Lucie) is the main substantive bill. HB 1521 creates the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program to finance through grants the commercialization of products and services developed through research and development at public universities in Florida. The goal is to convert goods or services produced by public universities into consumer products. The bill creates an entity called Sure Ventures Commercialization Inc. for the purposes of receiving, holding, and distributing the venture capital funds appropriated by the Legislature. Furthermore, the bill appropriates \$13 million for fiscal year 2007-2008 from the General Revenue Fund for the costs associated with starting these new programs, plus \$35 million in tax credits that may be issued at no more than \$10 million per fiscal year from July 1, 2012 and July 1, 2037.

Venture capital is essential for emerging technologies and companies to be able to get their products to the market. Presently, Florida's colleges and universities provide excellent support for research and development, but they fall behind in their ability to market these products and grow these companies. According to the bill's staff analysis "Venture capital investment in Florida is low compared to the amount of investment found in other states such as California, Massachusetts, New York, and Texas. In 2006, California had 1,445 venture capital deals totaling over \$12 billion in investment. Massachusetts, New York, and Texas all had at least \$1.25 billion in venture capital investment. Florida attracted only \$305 million in venture capital investment."

HB 1523, 1525, and 1527 also passed out of the House Economic Development Committee. These bills are linked with HB 1521 and create the necessary trust funds (HB 1525) and establish the necessary public records exemptions (HB 1523 & 1527) for the Sure Ventures Program to be able to operate.

**AIF supports legislation that creates the Sure Ventures Commercialization Program. Florida must begin to get in the proper posture to be able to compete with other states for these valuable venture capital dollars. This type of investment is critical for the growth of high-paying, high-skill, companies and for the diversification of Florida's economy. The jobs created by these emerging technologies are typically much higher-paying than others and attract the very best workers to our state.**

Please send your comments or suggestions to us at [aif@aif.com](mailto:aif@aif.com) or call the Governmental Affairs department at (850)224-7173.

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