



WEEKLY BRIEF

From the Week of April 29 – May 3, 2013

AIF is excited to announce that the 2013 Legislative Session has come to a successful close. With a number of top priorities seeing final passage, AIF has triumphed as the premier lobbying force in the Florida Capitol. Here's just a glimpse of the year in review:

- AIF is proud to announce that HB 357 by Representative Jim Boyd (R-Bradenton) has been ordered enrolled and will be sent to the Governor to be signed into law. **AIF** has been an outspoken proponent of **HB 357 because it will improve the development approval process for Florida's manufacturers.**
- The Legislature passed SB 1808, *Relating to Numeric Nutrient Criteria* (NNC), by the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation. The passage of SB 1808 is a major step in resolving FDEP's NNC problems with EPA. AIF led a coalition of interest to support FDEP's effort to base the NNC on Florida based science. AIF and the members of its Numeric Nutrient Criteria (NNC) Task Force thank Florida lawmakers for taking a historic step forward and passing landmark legislation that will finally bring resolution to the long standing debate over how to best protect our state's water bodies from nutrient pollution.
- AIF applauds Rep. Larry Metz (R-Groveland) and Senator Garrett Richter (R-Naples) for the passage of HB 7015, *Relating to Expert Testimony*. AIF supports legislation to adopt the *Daubert* standard for expert witness testimony and to align Florida courts with the Federal Rules of Evidence utilized in federal courts and adopted by the majority of state courts. The *Daubert* standard allows judges to be the "gatekeeper" on whether expert witness testimony should be admitted into evidence.
- AIF successfully lobbied language that was rolled into the Governor's sales tax repeal on manufacturing equipment purchases, contained in HB 7007. The language is to preserve the current law relating to a manufacturers' ability to receive a refund of sales taxes paid after the purchase of equipment. AIF has relentlessly advocated on behalf of Florida's business community to foster **economic development initiatives.**
- The Legislature passed HB 999 by Representative Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) . The bill is the major regulation reform bill of the Session. It amends & revises numerous provisions relating to development permit applications; marinas, boat yards, general permits for special events, and well permit. AIF has supported this legislation because it streamlines the permitting process for Florida's businesses.
- AIF's Worker's Compensation Coalition worked relentlessly advocating SB 662, *Relating to Workers' Compensation*, by Senator Alan Hays (R-Umatilla). AIF applauds Senator Alan Hays and Representative Matt Hudson for their tireless commitment to Florida employers demonstrated through their leadership on this important issue to maintain the success of our workers' compensation system. AIF's Workers' Compensation Coalition, and its more than 60 members, has spearheaded the all recent workers' compensation reforms, which have resulted in remarkable savings for employers, decreased time away from work for employees, and improved enforcement of the laws governing the workers' compensation system.

- Another important piece of legislation passing the Legislature this Session was HB 655, *Relating to Political Subdivisions*, by Representative Steve Precourt (R-Orlando). AIF supports this legislation because it is necessary to avoid what could become a patchwork of wage and benefit rules that may drive businesses away from Florida.
- Legislation to return Citizens Property Insurance Corporation back to an insurer of last resort, SB 1770, *Relating to Property Insurance* by Senator David Simmons (R-Altamonte Springs) passed Thursday, May 2nd.
- A very popular bill passing the Legislature was SB 52, *Relating to the Use of Wireless Communications Devices While Driving*, by Senator Nancy Detert (R-Venice). AIF has supported SB 52 because it will effectively decrease automobile accidents thus lowering insurance costs for Florida's businesses.
- Another great agriculture bill to pass was HB 7065, *Relating to Everglades Improvement and Management*, by Representative Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres) was passed on Thursday, May 2nd. AIF was pivotal in working with legislators to ensure the passage of this vital legislation.
- The Legislature passed an important education priority for AIF, HB 7165, *Relating to Early Learning*, by Chair Marlene O'Toole (R-Lady Lake). The bill, which increases accountability and transparency in the administration of early learning programs, contains several amendments including an amendment that would put the office of early learning in the office of independent choice. Another amendment, passed yesterday in the Senate, would require twenty-two percent of funds to be directly related to student learning. **AIF supports early learning programs as they are essential to providing support to working families across the state as well as developing a productive future Florida workforce.**

As always, please be sure to check back following the week of Session's conclusion for more information contained within AIF's Session Wrap-Up publication.