



WEEKLY BRIEF

From the Week of March 24 – 28, 2014

Transportation

HB 1389 – relating to Chauffeured Limousines

On Monday, March 24th, HB 1389, relating to Chauffeured Limousines, by Representative James W. Grant (R-Tampa) passed the House Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee by an 8-6 vote. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Economic Affairs Committee, its last stop before the House floor.



The bill creates a new category of public transit that provides service between specific origins and destinations selected by the individual user with such service being provided at a time that is agreed upon by the user and provider of the service. There are a number of mobile platforms driving this new category, such as Uber and Lift. The bill will provide a uniform statewide level of regulation of emerging transportation technology, specifically chauffeured limousines, to provide stability and predictability to businesses seeking to implement such technology, to provide convenience and safety to the traveling public, and to enhance personal mobility.

AIF supports statewide digital transportation service policies that will work to create price competition, promote consumer choice and create jobs.

Economic Development

HB 281 – relating to Keystone XL Pipeline

On Thursday, March 27th, HB 281, relating to Keystone XL Pipeline, by Representative Mike Hill (R-Pensacola Beach) passed the House Regulatory Affairs Committee by a 12-5 vote. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of this bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House floor.

The bill is a memorial that urges the President to issue final approval of the Keystone XL Pipeline Project (Project). The proposed Project involves the construction of an 875-mile pipeline between Morgan, Montana, and Steele City, Nebraska. The Project would also cross the U.S.-Canadian border at Morgan, Montana. The construction of the Project is the fourth and final phase of the larger Keystone Pipeline (Pipeline), a pipeline infrastructure that would have the capacity to deliver roughly 830,000 barrels per day of crude oil from oil sands in Canada to the Gulf Coast of Texas. Memorials have no force of law, as they are mechanisms for formally petitioning the U.S. Congress to act on a particular subject.

AIF supports developing memorials to Congress and the President supporting the expansion of hydraulic fracturing and the building of the Keystone XL pipeline.

SB 900 – relating to Public-private Partnerships

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 900, relating to Public-private Partnerships, by Senator Jack Latvala (R-Clearwater) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Community Affairs. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

The bill is designed to help both the State University System (SUS) and the construction industry in Florida. SB 900 will allow for the private sector to offer unsolicited bids on university projects, comprehensive agreements for construction projects, and grants the Board of Governors approval authority on public-private partnership projects within the SUS.

AIF strongly supports utilization of the private sector in helping to solve public construction needs. Government's role is critical in securing and advancing our state's infrastructure.

HB 685/SB 654 – relating to Business Organizations

On Tuesday, March 25th, HB 685, relating to Business Organizations, by Representative Patrick Rooney, Jr. (R-Palm Beach Gardens) unanimously passed the House Economic Development & Tourism Subcommittee. AIF waived in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Judiciary Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

On Wednesday, March 26th, SB 654, relating to Business Organizations, by Senator Jeff Clemens (D-Lake Worth) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Rules. The bill now heads to the Senate floor.

The bill amends the Florida Business Corporation Act to allow for the creation of two new forms of corporate enterprise: the social purpose corporation and the benefit corporation. These new entities will allow businesses to engage in societal benefit programs that may not involve or satisfy the traditional corporate norm of profit maximization. The new forms of corporation are similar, the primary difference being that a social purpose corporation has a specified social purpose or purposes designated in advance, whereas a benefit corporation is to create a general public benefit in a manner selected by management and assessed by a third-party standard.

AIF supports this legislation that will attract new businesses and entrepreneurs to the state of Florida.

SB 372 – relating to Developments of Regional Impact

On Thursday, March 27th, SB 372, by Senator Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton) passed the Senate Committee on Appropriations by an 11-5 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Rules, its last stop before the Senate floor.

The bill reduces the minimum population and density requirements for counties to qualify as a dense urban land area (DULA). Land development projects are exempt from development of regional impact (DRI) review if they are located in a DULA. This bill would designate an additional 7 counties and 20 municipalities as DULAs. The bill eliminates the adoption of an urban service area as criteria for designation for a DULA. The DRI review process was created in 1972 in order to ensure that developers and local governments take the necessary steps to ensure that large developments will not have negative impacts on the environment or public safety. Currently, 8 counties and 242 cities qualify as a Dense Urban Land Area (DULA), exempting them from DRI review because of the sophistication of their local planning personnel and policies.

AIF supports this bill because it will reduce bureaucracy and red tape for Florida's businesses.

Education & Workforce

HB 7083 – relating to School Choice

On Monday, March 24th, HB 7083, relating to Charter Schools, by House Choice & Innovation Subcommittee passed the House Education Appropriations Subcommittee by an 8-5 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Education Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

SB 1528 – relating to School Choice

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 1528, relating to School Choice, by Senator Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park) passed the Senate Committee on Education by a 7-1 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

These bills create new opportunities for high-performing charter school operators to establish quality charter schools in Florida, including charter schools in hard-to-serve areas. The bill authorizes an out-of-state entity that successfully operates a system of charter schools to apply and qualify for high-performing charter school system status. The state board must adopt rules specifying a process and criteria for evaluating out-of-state entities for “high-performing” status. Eligibility criteria must be aligned with the priorities specified in the federal Charter Schools Program Grants for Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools, which emphasizes student achievement. Additionally, the bill shifts the focus of the state’s program for replicating quality charter schools towards meeting school district needs for innovative school choice options and serving areas served by struggling traditional public schools.

AIF supports educational choice. In addition, AIF supports capital outlay funding for public charter schools, removing artificial enrollment caps that prevent public charter schools from meeting the demand of students on waiting lists, restricting authority of school districts from imposing additional regulatory burdens on public charter schools and changes to funding formulas to require that funding follows the individual student.

SB 212 – relating to High School Graduation Requirements

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 212, relating to High School Graduation Requirements, by Senator Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange) passed the Senate Committee on Education by a 6-3 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

The bill removes the requirement for financial literacy to be included in the instruction of Economics. Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2014-2015 school year, the high school graduation requirements must include a one-half credit in personal financial literacy and money management instruction. Additionally, the bill reduces the number of required elective credits from eight to seven and one-half credits.

AIF supports the bill because it is important that our future workforce is not only equipped with technical skills, but also basic financial literacy skills such as balancing a checkbook, understanding budgets and general money management.

SB 628 – relating to Educational Facilities Financing

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 628, relating to Educational Facilities Financing, by Senator Bill Montford (D-Apalachicola) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Education. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

The bill expands the Higher Educational Facilities Financing Law (HEFFA) in two significant ways by adding non-profit, SACS accredited, K-12 schools to those institutions eligible to participate and expanding the definition of a project that can be financed with tax exempt bonds, which would include related projects such as wetland mitigation when financing a building project. HEFFA was created in Florida Statute in 2001 to give independent, non-profit, four year, SACS accredited institutions (all 31 Independent Institutions) access to the tax exempt bond market to borrow funds for capital outlay and cash flow purposes. These funds are not backed by the full faith and credit of the state, but rather by private capital and institution credit. The bill also expands the types of projects that can be financed with tax exempt bonds. An amendment was adopted by the committee, clarifying that charter schools would not be eligible for this mechanism.

AIF supports this bill and has made this expansion a priority for the 2014 legislative session. This bill will allow ICUF institutions and non-profit SACS accredited K-12 institutions to expand their capacity and access for Florida’s K-20 students and at no cost to the Florida taxpayers.

SB 790 – relating to Education

On Thursday, March 27th, SB 790, relating to Education, by Senator John Legg (R-Lutz) passed the Senate Committee on Appropriations by a 17-1 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate floor.

This bill creates the Florida digital classrooms plan and allocation to establish a targeted and purposeful approach to technology enhancements in Florida’s classrooms to improve student performance outcomes. The bill ties technology-enhanced classroom teaching and learning to measurable student performance outcomes and requires an independent evaluation of the school districts’ outcomes and technology inventory and infrastructure needs,

which the districts must report to the department. Consequently, the school districts must document how technology enhancements effect performance of students. In addition, the bill authorizes public schools to promote digital literacy and competency in Florida's schools, which will help equip Florida's students with skills to succeed in a competitive economy.

AIF supports removing all barriers for accessing all forms of innovative technology-driven education. Improving our workforce through education reforms will be a key ingredient to job creation and also ensuring businesses continue to establish in Florida.

SB 850 – relating to Education

On Thursday, March 27th, SB 850, relating to Education, by Senator John Legg (R-Lutz) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Appropriations. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate floor.

The bill expands options to elementary students, expands options and strengthens requirements for middle school and high school students, creates a new middle grades early warning system to identify at-risk students, expands and strengthens anti-hazing provisions, and requires the Florida College System (FCS) institutions to establish a collegiate high school program for students in every school district in the colleges' designated service area.

AIF supports this bill because improving our workforce through education reforms will be a key ingredient to job creation and also ensuring businesses continue to locate in Florida.

SB 1642 – relating to Education Accountability

On Thursday, March 27th, SB 1642, relating to Education Accountability, by the Senate Committee on Education unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Appropriations. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate floor.

The bill creates a clarified A through F and 100-point school grading system where point values, not safety nets or triggers, are the indicator of the grade earned. Under the bill, district and school grades, which would be released every year in the summer at the same time, will be simplified and transparent. No changes would be made to the current school grading system in 2013-14; however, the new 2014-15 school grades will function as an informational baseline for schools to work toward improved future performance.

AIF supports a comprehensive effort to expand economic opportunity through education. Increased transparency in school grading is a large component to making education a better value for Florida's families and taxpayers alike.

Environment

SB 1206 – relating to Agricultural Industry Certifications

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 1206, relating to Agricultural Industry Certifications, by Senator Bill Montford (D-Apalachicola) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Education. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

The bill would develop a pathway for students to show their expertise in the agricultural industry. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS), in cooperation with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science at the University of Florida and the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University, to annually provide to the state board and the Department of Education information and industry certifications for farm occupations to be considered for placement on the Industry Certification Funding List and the Postsecondary Industry Certification Funding List.

AIF supports adding agriculture to industry certifications because it recognizes the critical need for agricultural careers in the state of Florida.

SB 1174 – relating to Power Plant Carbon Dioxide Emissions

On Wednesday, March 26th, SB 1174, relating to Power Plant Carbon Dioxide Emissions, by Senator Audrey Gibson (D-Jacksonville) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities, its last stop before the Senate floor.

This bill is a memorial that urges the United State Congress to allow states to develop their own performance standards, compliance schedules, and guidelines for regulating carbon dioxide emissions. Specifically, the memorial urges Congress to respect the primacy of states and to rely on state regulators who take into account unique policies, energy needs, resource mix, economic priorities, and environmental priorities.

AIF supports clean coal technology as a source of reliable and reasonably priced energy and believes the state is best suited to determine its own performance standards, compliance schedules, and guidelines for regulating carbon dioxide emissions.

SB 1464 – relating to Environmental Regulation

On Wednesday, March 26th, SB 1464, relating to Environmental Regulation, by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey) passed the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation by a 4-1 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Community Affairs.

The bill does quite a few things with regard to environmental regulation and permitting. Most notably, the bill provides voting requirements for the adoption or transmittal of a comprehensive plan or plan amendment, prohibits local governments from rescinding prior land use approvals for certain agricultural lands; exempts multi-family dock owners from a permit fee; prohibits local governments from requiring authorizations or permits for certain water structure and infrastructure projects; authorizes consumptive use permits for 50 years for certain landowners and 30 years for a development of regional impact, among other changes.

An amendment from Senator Jack Latvala (R-Clearwater) removed section one from the bill that would have prohibited local governments from modifying, readopting, or amending local wetland, springs, or stormwater ordinances, regulations, or rules, even if the ordinance was adopted before July 1, 2003.

AIF supports this bill because it will lessen regulation on Florida's agri-businesses and its businesses in general. AIF supports legislation that requires all mandatory and optional elements of a comprehensive plan by a board of county commissioners be adopted by a simple majority vote.

Health Care

HB 1001/SB 1354 – relating to Health Care

On Tuesday, March 25th, HB 1001, relating to Health Care, by Representative Jason Brodeur (R-Sanford) unanimously passed the House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee. **Tammy Perdue, General Counsel of AIF**, stood in opposition of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Health & Human Services Committee.



Also on Tuesday, March 25th, SB 1354, the companion bill to HB 1001, by Senator Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Health Policy. **Tammy Perdue, General Counsel of AIF**, stood in opposition of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance, its last stop before the Senate floor.

AIF released the following press release today regarding HB 1001/SB 1354.

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) today opposed the advancement of House Bill 1001, by Representative Jason Brodeur (R-Sanford), and Senate Bill 1354, by Senator Denise Grimsley (R-Sebring). These bills

relating to health care both passed out of their respective committees in the Florida House Insurance and Banking Subcommittee and the Florida Senate Committee on Health Policy.

“All along, AIF has supported access to affordable quality health care for Floridians,” said Tammy Perdue, general counsel for AIF.

“Unfortunately, HB 1001 and SB 1354 do the opposite. These bills actually make health care less affordable for Florida consumers and businesses by ultimately causing an increase in pharmacy costs through additional, onerous regulation.”

“AIF opposes this legislation that would bring additional costs to Florida consumers and businesses,” said Perdue. “With the current state of our health care system, we must focus on measures that will ensure greater access to quality care for Floridians at more affordable costs for their employers.”

HB 1001 has been referred to Health & Human Service, Appropriations and Regulatory Affairs Committees in the Florida House, while SB 1354 is now slated to move to the Senate Committee on Banking and Insurance.

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HB 751 – relating to Telehealth

On Monday, March 24th, HB 751, relating to Telemedicine Services, by Representative Travis Cummings (R-Orange Park) and Representative Mia Jones (D-Jacksonville) passed the House Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee by a 10-3 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Health & Human Services Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

The bill would encourage the use of telehealth in Florida. It would establish definitions for “telehealth” and would ensure that a telehealth provider documents the services provided to a Florida patient. Further, the bill would allow a health care provider not licensed in Florida to provide health care services to a Florida patient as long as the provider registers with the applicable practice board or with the Department of Health. Health care providers would be exempt from registering with the State of Florida if the service being provided is during an emergency situation, in consultation with a Florida licensed health care provider and a provider does not provide this kind of service more than ten times per year.

AIF supports legislation that permits an unfettered role for telemedicine services that will allow our citizens access to better quality care at lower costs.

HB 323 – relating to Pharmacy Technicians

On Thursday, March 27, HB 323, relating to Pharmacy Technicians, by Representative Mike La Rosa (R-Saint Cloud) and Representative Daphne Campbell (D-Miami Shores) passed the House Health & Human Services Committee by an 11-5 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House floor.

The bill would increase, to six, the number of registered pharmacy technicians a licensed pharmacist may supervise. Current law provides that the pharmacist may not supervise more than one technician. Up to three additional registered pharmacy technicians may be supervised if permitted by guidelines adopted by the Board of Pharmacy. Rep. LaRosa amended the bill with language to ensure that guidelines adopted by the Board would include automatic board approval for pharmacists working with an automated pharmacy system or for a pharmacy performing centralized prescription filling services to supervise more than one technician.

An amendment was offered, but later withdrawn by Representative Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) which would have capped the number of technicians the Board of Pharmacy could allow a pharmacist to supervise at six. However, Rep. Patronis and a number of other members continued to express concerns about not having a hard cap on the number of technicians a pharmacist could supervise.

AIF supports access for Floridians to high-paying jobs, such as pharmacy technician.

Insurance

HB 879 – relating to Flood Insurance

On Monday, March 24th, HB 879, relating to Flood Insurance, by Representative Ed Hooper (R-Clearwater) unanimously passed the House Government Operations Appropriations Subcommittee. The bill now heads to the House Regulatory Affairs Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

This legislation is the House's flood insurance plan, designed to attract personal residential insurers to write flood insurance, which is currently covered almost entirely by the National Flood Insurance Program.

AIF supports the Legislature's efforts to attract more private writers for flood insurance to give consumers an alternative to the federally run government program, the National Flood Insurance Program.

SB 1308 – relating to Insurer Solvency

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 1308, relating to Insurer Solvency, by Senator David Simmons (R-Altamonte Springs) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Rules, its last stop before the Senate floor.

The bill adopts several updates from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). Specially, the bill adds additional protections for holding company systems, updates requirements for life insurance reserves, and improves actuarial information provided to OIR from insurers.

AIF supports legislation that modernizes insurance regulation and takes steps to achieve uniformity with other states, creating consistent regulations and a more efficient allocation of capital, which improves Florida's insurance marketplace for business and personal lines policyholders.

Legal & Judicial

SB 470 – relating to Malt Beverages

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 470, relating to Malt Beverages, by Senator Nancy Detert (R-Venice) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Community Affairs. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Appropriations.



The bill repeals the prohibition against beer tastings and permits licensed malt beverage distributors and vendors to conduct malt beverage tastings at licensed premises that are authorized to sell malt beverages for consumption on premises. Current law permits only wine and liquor distributors and vendors to conduct wine and liquor tastings at licensed premises that are authorized to sell such beverages.

AIF supports this legislation because it creates a level playing field here in the state for beer manufacturers.

SB 1524 – relating to Security of Confidential Personal Information

On Monday, March 24th, SB 1524, relating to Security of Confidential Personal Information, by Senator John Thrasher (R-St. Augustine) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism. **Tammy Perdue, AIF General Counsel**, testified in the committee and expressed appreciation for the amendment and the issues it rectified. She also pointed out the need for additional revision prior to the bill's final passage. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Rules, its last stop before the Senate floor.



This bill creates new Florida requirements for various notifications a company must make in the event of a data breach. This measure was originated by Attorney General Pam Bondi. AIF and our members across all industries and areas of the state have worked with General Bondi and Senator Thrasher over the past several weeks to find a

way to provide the consumer safeguards needed while avoiding unintended consequences that create costly regulatory burdens on businesses. At today's committee an amendment was adopted which revised much of the bill and addresses some of the business community's concerns. If your business would like to participate in the ongoing discussions relating to this bill, please email Mrs. Perdue at tperdue@aif.com to include your concerns related to this important bill.

View Mrs. Perdue's testimony regarding SB 1524 here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpElfaG-Xal&feature=em-upload_owner

HB 1135 – relating to Civil Liability for Farmers

On Monday, March 24th, HB 1135, relating to Civil Liability of Farmers, by Representative Kevin Rader (D-Boca Raton) unanimously passed the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Judiciary Committee, its last stop before the House floor.

These bills exempt a farmer from civil liability if he gratuitously allows a person to come onto his/her land to remove farm produce or crops at any time. Presently the exemption applies only when that activity takes place after harvesting.

AIF supports legislation that will reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits brought against Florida's business owners.

SB 926 – relating to Local Regulation of Wage Theft

On Tuesday, March 25th, SB 926, relating to Local Regulation of Wage Theft, by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Committee on Rules, its last stop before the Senate floor.

This bill would prescribe a wage theft model ordinance for local governments in order to ensure consistency and reduce regulatory burdens for employers with multiple locations throughout the state and lessen the confusion for employees. The model ordinance would require that counties partner with a local legal service organization to help resolve these issues to the satisfaction of both parties in a timely fashion while providing flexibility and certainty.

However, an AIF opposed late-filed amendment by Senator Darren Soto (D-Kissimmee) added a second model ordinance as an option for counties. The amendment was passed and included in the bill language. AIF stood down on supporting the amended bill during its vote in the Senate Committee on Judiciary due to the detrimental impact of the Soto amendment.

The bill goes to the Senate Committee on Rules next, where Senators and stakeholders from the business community and employee groups have agreed to continue to work together to come to a compromise.

AIF supports this legislation that will foster positive work environments and encourage economic development.

SB 242 – relating to Security of a Protected Consumer's Information

On Wednesday, March 26th, SB 242, relating to Security of a Protected Consumer's Information, by Senator Nancy Detert (R-Venice) unanimously passed on the Senate floor. The bill will now be sent to the House for consideration.

The bill creates the "Keeping I.D. Safe (KIDS) Act" to authorize a representative of a minor consumer younger than sixteen years of age, or a guardian, to place a security freeze on that consumer's credit report. The reason being, while parents typically apply for a Social Security number for their child shortly after birth, a credit reporting agency does not create a credit report or history until an application for credit is received. An identity thief will typically apply for credit with a child's Social Security number, but with a different name and date of birth. As a result, the identity theft may go undetected for years. A recent study conducted by ID Analytics estimated that more than 140,000 instances of identity fraud are perpetrated on minors in the United States each year.

AIF supports protecting consumer information to guard minors from potential identity theft. Any legislation resulting in reduced instances of credit fraud is a common-sense action for the Legislature.

IT Governance

HB 4017 – relating to Cable and Video Services

On Thursday, March 27th, HB 4017, relating to Cable and Video Services, by Representative Ray Wesley Rodrigues (R-Fort Myers) unanimously passed the House Regulatory Affairs Committee. **AIF Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of this bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House floor.



SB 1010 – relating to Cable and Video Services

On Monday, March 24th, SB 1010, relating to Cable and Video Services, by Senator Garrett Richter (R-Naples) unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House floor for consideration.

These bills repeats a study by the Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability on the status of video competition in Florida. This is a study that duplicates an annual national study done by the Federal Communications Commission and is an unnecessary expense for government and for companies to compile and submit proprietary information.

AIF supports eliminating duplicative laws that put an unnecessary compliance burden on Florida's businesses and government.

Taxation & Budget

HB 898 – relating to Communications Services Tax

On Monday, March 24th, HB 898, relating to Communications Services Tax, by Senator Joseph Abruzzo (D-Wellington), unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Finance and Tax.

This bill, brought to the attention of the legislature by the hotel and lodging industry, intends to relieve hoteliers, both large and small, from erroneous application of the Communications Services Tax (CST) by the Florida Department of Revenue on hotels, their franchises and properties. Specifically, the bill provides clarification that certain communications over the internet do not make a hotel a provider of communications services and thus those communications are not subject to the CST.

AIF supports this bill because the impact of the state's tourism industry, along with the lodging industry, affects every corner of the state and further and erroneous taxation of the hotel and lodging industry can only harm local economies.

FTSC5 – relating to Economic Development

On Wednesday, March 26th, **FTSC5**, relating to Economic Development, by House Finance & Tax Subcommittee passed the House Finance & Tax Subcommittee by a 16-2 vote. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House floor.

The bill provides a broad range of tax cuts and spending aimed at either directly or indirectly encouraging economic development. The bill incorporates provisions from a handful of other bills AIF has been advocating this session. Specifically, the bill includes tax holidays for consumers, an increase in the corporate tax exemption, a sales tax exemption for machinery and equipment, modernization of communication services taxes, and the Commissioner of Agriculture's priority of reducing the sales tax on electrical usage for businesses while increasing revenues for the Public Education Capital Outlay fund. AIF has been advocating for all of these provisions individually throughout the 2014 legislative session.

AIF supports reducing the tax burden on Florida's businesses and any measure that will make state more attractive for conducting business.

SB 803 – relating to Communication Services Tax

On Wednesday, March 26th, SB 803, relating to Communication Services Tax, by Representative Jim Boyd (R-Bradenton) unanimously passed the House Finance & Tax Subcommittee. AIF stood in support of the bill during the committee. The bill now heads to the House Energy & Utilities Subcommittee.

The bill amends s. 202.11(13)(b), F.S., to add “the use of communications services to furnish a good or service that is not subject to [the communications services tax]” to the list of exemptions from the term “sales price” for the purpose of determining communications services tax liability. The exclusion applies to the use of a communications service to furnish a product or service that is not subject to tax, whether charged as part of the sales price of the nontaxable good or service or charged separately. Any charge for that nontaxable good or service is also excluded from the definition, regardless of the nomenclature used to describe the charge on an invoice.

AIF supports reducing communication services taxes on Florida's businesses. Subsequently, businesses could utilize this tax savings to reinvest in their business.

HB 175 – relating to Emergency Communication System

On Thursday, March 27th, HB 175, relating to Emergency Communication System, by Representative Greg Steube (R-Sarasota)unanimously passed on the House floor. The bill will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.

The bill would reduce the current charge for 911 services on all phone lines, including mobile, from the current \$0.50 to \$0.46. In addition, the legislation implements the findings of the E911 Board, allowing for the collection of the 911 fee at the retail point of sale for prepaid wireless phone plans. Implementing a point of sale collection method for prepaid plans and enabling the fee to be collected from everyone with access to 911 may make it possible to reduce the fee for all consumers. The bill would also put priority on allowing counties to use funds to upgrade and replace 911 systems for next generation.

AIF supports lessening the 911 surcharge on Florida's phone users as well as supports a robust and modern emergency communications system vital to the welfare of Florida's business community.