

DAILY BRIEF

For the 2021 Legislative Session



FROM MARCH 2, 2021

Welcome back for the first day of the 2021 Legislative Session! Below you will find a brief synopsis of legislation that passed in committee today. Stay tuned for a recap of the week including videos from the Speaker of the House, Senate President, and the Governor!

ENVIRONMENT

SB 94 – Relating to Water Storage North of Lake Okeechobee

On Tuesday, March 2, [SB 94](#) by Senator Jason Brodeur (R-Sanford) was heard by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and was reported favorable with 5 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill requires the South Florida Water Management District in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to expedite implementation of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP). The LOWRP is a project that provides water storage north of Lake Okeechobee.

SB 94 will now go to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AIF supports efforts to capture and store water north of Lake Okeechobee which will support the reduction of harmful discharges from the lake thus preserving Florida's most important natural resource and the businesses that depend on clean water.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

SB 72 – Relating to Civil Liability for Damages Relating to COVID-19

On Tuesday, March 2, [SB 72](#) by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) was heard by the Senate Commerce and Tourism Committee and was reported favorable with 7 yeas and 4 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill provides civil immunity from COVID-19 liability to businesses, educational institutions, religious institutions, governmental entities, and other covered entities that acted in good faith

during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill protects reasonably acting entities and institutions so that they can predict their COVID-19-related litigation risks, remain viable, and continue to contribute to the state's well-being.

SB 72 will now go to the Senate Rules Committee.

AIF supports legislation that protects the Florida business community from frivolous and costly litigation by plaintiffs suing to settle that drives up the cost of doing business and deters further economic growth in the state.

HB 7005 – Relating to Civil Liability for COVID-19 Related Claims Against Certain Health Care Providers

On Tuesday, March 2, **HB 7005** (formerly PCB HHS1) sponsored by the House Health & Human Services Committee was heard by the House Pandemics & Public Emergencies Committee and was reported favorable with 12 yeas and 6 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in support of this legislation.**

This bill provides heightened liability protections to health care providers for negligence claims by patients and residents arising under the existing laws that govern medical malpractice and long-term care facilities related to:

- Contracting COVID-19;
- Injury due to delay or omission in scheduling surgery or an act or omission in providing care for a medical condition due to a lack of resources caused by COVID-19;
- Novel or experimental COVID-19 treatment given to a COVID-19 patient; or
- Treatment of a COVID-19 patient whose injuries were related to an exacerbation of pre-existing conditions by COVID-19.

HB 7005 will now go to the House Judiciary Committee.

AIF supports legislation that protects the Florida health care community, who has been on the frontline during this pandemic, from frivolous and costly litigation by plaintiffs suing to settle.