



# DAILY BRIEF

Legislative Session



**FROM MARCH 7, 2023**

## **ENERGY**

### **HB 529 – Relating to Natural Gas Fuel Taxes**

On Tuesday, March 7, 2023, [HB 529](#) by Representative Jim Mooney (R-Islamorada) was heard by the House Energy, Communications & Cybersecurity Subcommittee and was reported favorably with 17 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Legislative Affairs Assistant Tanner Warwick stood in support of this legislation.**

In 2014 the Florida legislature passed a measure that provided for a sales tax exemption for natural gas fuels until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. HB 529 would extend this tax exemption until January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Many logistical and industrial operators in Florida use natural gas fleets to service their customers. This relief has allowed Florida businesses to keep operating costs low, which trickles down to lower costs for consumers. In addition to the economic pros of HB 529, the environmental impacts are very substantial. By providing more access to natural gas, we can cut down on Florida’s overall carbon footprint. These cost-cutting measures keep Florida’s business market competitive against other states, improve our energy independence, and retain jobs in the sunshine state.

HB 529 will now go to the Ways & Means Committee for consideration.

**AIF supports legislation that reduces the state sales tax on commercial electricity and gas consumption. Reducing this expense is a good way to make Florida more attractive for businesses to locate in the state.**

## **LEGAL & JUDICIAL**

### **HB 593 – Relating to Criminal History Information**

On Tuesday, March 7, 2023 [HB 593](#) by Representative Spencer Roach (R-Fort Meyers) was heard by the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee and was reported favorable with 15 yeas

and 1 nays. **AIF's Vice President of Governmental Affairs Adam Basford stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill revises the process by which a regulatory board within the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) may consider the criminal background of license applicants. The bill revises the process for a court-ordered sealing of a criminal record to allow a person to petition a court to seal a criminal history record if the record has been automatically sealed by the State of Florida and the subject of the sealed record presents a certificate of sealing issued by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

HB 593 will now go to the Ethics, Elections and Open Government Subcommittee for consideration.

**AIF supports legislative efforts that allows individuals with sealed records at the State level to petition local government to further seal their records. Businesses in Florida drive the economy and employers need employees. A sealed record at the state level is indicative of amends made, and therefore these subjects should have access to well-paying jobs that keep Florida moving forward.**

## **CIVIL JUSTICE**

### **SB 236 - Relating to Civil Remedies**

On Friday, February 24, [SB 236](#) by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast) was heard in the Senate Banking and Insurance Committee and was reported favorable with a vote of 8 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF consultant Jessica Schmor spoke in support of this legislation.**

SB 236 is a bill that seeks to eliminate the cottage industry of trial lawyers and frivolous legal artists undermining the integrity of our civil justice system in Florida. This bill addresses current loopholes in our laws and court procedures that keep their cottage industry alive by addressing 5 main issue areas.

- It will institute true transparency in damages so that juries base damages awards on the true cost of medical treatment instead of inflated bills.
- For third-party bad faith claims, it will allow a 60-day notice and right to cure, affirm that mere negligence does not amount to bad faith as well as require plaintiffs and their representatives to cooperate in good faith.
- It will change Florida's comparative negligence system so that a party who is more than 50 percent at fault for their own injuries may not recover damages.

- It will limit the use of a contingency fee multiplier for attorney fee awards so they may only be used in rare and exceptional circumstances.
- It will repeal Florida’s one-way attorney fees for all litigation.
- someone is injured on a property owner’s premises by a third party conducting a criminal act. This amendment passed.

SB 236 will now go to the Senate Judiciary Committee for consideration.

**AIF supports legislation that will help eliminate unnecessary legal costs and provide much needed stability for Florida’s employers.**

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### **SB 626- Relating to Rural Electric Cooperatives**

On Tuesday, March 7, [SB 626](#) by Senator Nick DiCeglie (R- St. Petersburg) was heard in the Senate Regulated Industries Committee and was reported favorable with a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Vice President of Governmental Affairs Adam Basford stood in support of this legislation.**

SB 626 seeks to create a level playing field in broadband deployment. Access to Cooperative Utility poles on reasonable terms and conditions is necessary for broadband services to be deployed in many areas across Florida. AIF believes parties should be encouraged to come to an agreement related to pole access and reasonable terms and conditions.

**AIF supports the expansion of broadband services to all Floridians and supports legislation that seeks to promote that goal.**