

# Economic Development & Space

Since the beginning of the year, Florida's unemployment rate has steadily dropped from month to month, and Florida continues to create more jobs. While Florida is a relatively low-tax state, more needs to be done to attract high-skill, high-paying jobs. AIF believes that an emphasis on manufacturing and ports, alongside a commitment to commercial space activity, can bring Florida to the forefront of job creation.

## Manufacturing

**AIF SUPPORTS legislation aimed at improving the development approval process for manufacturers in Florida.**

**HB 515 by Rep. Lake Ray (R-Jacksonville) and SB 786 by Sen. Jeremy Ring (D-Margate)** will place manufacturers and fabricators in a competitive position similar to what is available in neighboring states. Known as the Manufacturing Competitiveness Act, this policy proposal would promote coordination and collaboration among state and regional agencies responsible for permit approvals and provide manufacturers with a single point of regulatory contact.

**AIF SUPPORTS efforts to retool the state's economic development incentives for manufacturers by shifting from a jobs-based incentives system to a capital investment-based system.** The state's current jobs-based incentives scheme is too narrow and looks only at the direct jobs created by one employer at one facility. It does not consider the capital investment per employee. This policy shift would not only create jobs within a single existing employer, but would also foster a plethora of indirect jobs, thereby increasing the potential to expand and grow Florida's exports. **HB 507 by Rep. Ray and SB 684 by Sen. Ring** accomplish this goal.

## Space Agenda

In 2012, AIF will continue to be a strong advocate of the space agenda working with Space Florida and other partners in the aerospace industry to continue to make space issues a priority for our state. **Specifically, AIF will SUPPORT:**

- Funding for Space Florida through recurring general revenue (**HB 265/SB 934**).
- Redefining "launch support facilities" within the Florida Department of Transportation so they can direct funding for space-related infrastructure projects (**HB 97/SB 634**).

- Adding Cecil Airport in Jacksonville as a Spaceport Territory (**HB 59/SB 110**).
- Legislation that allows public-private partnerships within the Department of Economic Opportunity to receive structured, up-front payments for infrastructure projects.

## Ports

**AIF SUPPORTS efforts to include port incentives in any economic development package considered during the 2012 Session.** A continued focus on Florida's 14 deepwater ports should be a priority for the Florida Legislature. Under consideration is legislation that would provide companies with incentives for moving container and bulk packaging through Florida's ports. This type of legislation would go hand-in-hand with recent efforts to enhance our ports' infrastructure in preparation for the widening of the Panama Canal.

## New Markets Development Program

**AIF SUPPORTS Florida's continued participation in the Florida New Markets Development Program.** To date, this program has already invested close to \$133 million in Florida by leveraging both private and public-sector investment in low-income communities throughout our state. This investment has created or retained 1,437 jobs and is anticipated to create 8,000 jobs by 2016.

**AIF will also engage in Economic Development issues by:**

- Supporting the elimination of the sales tax on **manufacturing machinery and equipment**.
- Supporting efforts to elevate the stature of the manufacturing sector within the new **Department of Economic Opportunity**.
- Supporting efforts to increase **import and export** trade opportunities for Florida.
- Supporting the state's efforts to enhance the manufacturing **workforce** and other ready-work industries.
- Supporting the continued availability of **state funds** for enhancing economic development.



### AIF Lobby Team Members Assigned to the Area of Economic Development & Space:

José L. Gonzalez – Space

Stephen Shiver – Economic Development

Tamela Perdue – Ports