



DAILY BRIEF

From December 7, 2009

Legislators were back at work Monday after a weekend break from the action of Special Session. The day began with a special briefing in the House chamber for those members of the House of Representatives who were absent on Thursday and Friday of last week due to the National Black Caucus of State Legislators conference, which was held in South Florida. The briefing was followed by a final round of floor deliberations in the House where the rail legislation (HB 1B) passed by a vote of 84 to 25. The bill was immediately sent to the Senate where it was referred to three committees: Transportation, Judiciary, and Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations. A complete report of what happened to the bill in the Senate can be found in the "Transportation" section of today's *Daily Brief*.

Transportation

The Senate Transportation Committee met to debate and vote on HB 1B today. Senator Jeremy Ring (D-Margate) explained the merits of the bill, stressing its economic development potential as well as some of the negative consequences that could take place in the event the bill does not pass. According to Senator Ring, if the bill is not passed Tri-Rail and passenger rail travel in Florida will never become a reality. Additionally, he explained how Florida might have to repay a \$256 million grant from the federal government for Tri-Rail unless the state approves an additional \$13 million to \$15 million annual subsidy for the South Florida commuter rail — an important provision of HB 1B.

Chairman Andy Gardiner (R-Orlando) highlighted the fact that the bill sets up a process to ensure the future of rail in Florida. The bill proponents emphasized that the bill is about more than SunRail alone.

After much debate and numerous questions from Senators Paula Dockery (D-Lakeland), Gary Siplin (D-Orlando) and Arthenia Joyner (D-Tampa), the bill passed on a 5 to 4 vote. Senators Thad Altman (R-Melbourne), Lee Constantine, (R-Altamonte Springs), Mike Fasano (R-New Port Richey), Andy Gardiner (R-Orlando) and Mike Haridopolos (R-Melbourne) voted in favor of the bill. Senators Carey Baker (R-Eustis), **Dockery**, **Joyner** and **Siplin** voted against the bill. Also in attendance and participating throughout the discussion were Senators **Ring**, Joe Negron (R-Stuart), John Thrasher (R-Jacksonville) and Senate Minority Leader Al Lawson (D-Tallahassee).

HB 1B will now be considered by the two remaining committees it was referred to (Judiciary and Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations) on Tuesday. If the bill passes both committees the Senate could take it up on the Senate floor as early as Tuesday afternoon. It remains unclear if the necessary 20 votes for passage have been secured by Senate President Jeff Atwater (R-North Palm Beach). A number of key Senators are being lobbied heavily by Governor Crist and members of the Senate leadership team.

Associated Industries of Florida supports passage of legislation creating a comprehensive rail transit system in Florida. At a time when so many Floridians are out of work, we must make the necessary infrastructure investments that will lead to the creation of jobs and bring about much needed investments to our state.

Information Technology

The Senate Policy and Steering Committee on Ways and Means heard a presentation on current initiatives by the Agency for Enterprise Information Technology (AEIT) given by its Executive Director, **Mr. David Taylor**.

Mr. Taylor gave a power point presentation that lasted about an hour and took a number of questions from committee members. He explained that the AEIT had four major projects prescribed to the Agency by statute. These include:

- the monitoring of full service transition in primary data centers;
- state data center system consolidation;
- the development of a statewide e-mail system; and
- the planning and monitoring of information technology security as a statewide service.

As he was giving more detail on the status of the data center consolidation, Senator Don Gaetz (R-Fort Walton Beach) asked a question regarding the inability of the Department of Health's computers to talk to the Agency for Health Care Administration after the consolidation. Mr. Taylor answered that that was a business process issue of the individual agencies, but the fact that the two agencies' computers were in the same data center would help facilitate the communications between the programs. It was; however, an issue for the agencies to resolve.

This precipitated questions on this subject by Senators John Thrasher (R-Jacksonville), Mike Bennett (R-Bradenton), JD Alexander (R-Winter Haven) and Evelyn Lynn (R-Ormond Beach). Senator Bennett said he could not believe the two Agencies systems' could not talk to each other and asked what we need to do to get it done. Mr. Taylor responded that we do not have an enterprise information technology plan and that each agency does its own thing. He said we need a plan and enterprise architecture, which was not in his statutory authority.

Senator Alexander commented that we there is a deficiency in Florida's IT systems, especially on budget issues. Senator Lynn stated in her comments that we just had to get the data consolidation done first.

The discussion highlighted the obvious need for the state to give the AEIT the authority to develop an IT plan and enterprise architecture to deal with the state's business processes so that necessary information can be easily shared between agencies when needed.

The Committee agenda called for a report by the Technology Workgroup but due to the length of the presentation by the estimating conference on the upcoming budget it was differed to the next meeting.