



DAILY BRIEF

From April 8, 2013

Economic Development

In the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism, **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis**, stood in support of SB 1394, *Relating to Motorsports Entertainment Complexes*, by Senator Dorothy Hukill (R-Port Orange). This proposed Motorsports Entertainment Complex project calls for the redevelopment of the Daytona track and an accompanying mixed-use facility that will serve as a year-round tourist destination while providing space for offices, light manufacturing, research and development, residential, hotel and retail. In the current economic climate, Florida should take advantage of this opportunity to attract new businesses and an increased number of tourists.



The bill passed unanimously and will next be heard in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Finance and Tax.

AIF supports any legislation attracting new businesses to the state and benefiting Florida's tourism industry.

Additionally, during the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism, **AIF's Brewster Bevis** also stood in support of SB 528, *Relating to Growth Management*, by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey). Under the bill, the local initiative and referendum processes allowed to continue are limited to those which:

- Were in effect on June 1, 2011;
- Were expressly authorized by a local government charter specifically for matters such as comprehensive plan or map amendments and development orders; and
- Affect more than 5 acres of land.

The bill passed unanimously and will next be heard in the Senate Committee on Rules.

AIF supports legislation that clarifies which local initiative and referendum processes relating to development orders, comprehensive plan amendments, or map amendments are not prohibited.

Health Care

During the Senate Committee on Judiciary, legislators heard SB 398, *Relating to Physicians Assistants*, by Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville). The bill clarifies the services physician assistants (PAs) are authorized to execute. Specifically, the bill clarifies that PAs can order medications for a supervisory physician's patient in a hospital, ambulatory surgical center, or mobile surgical facility.

The bill passed unopposed and will next be heard on the Senate floor.

AIF supports any legislation allowing trained, professional health care providers to deliver basic care they may currently be prohibited from providing due to regulatory licensing barriers.

Environment & Agriculture

In the Senate Committee on Agriculture, AIF stood in support of SB 1684, *Relating to Environmental Regulation*, by Senator Thad Altman (R-Melbourne). The bill is the major regulation reform bill of the Session. It amends & revises numerous provisions relating to development permit applications; marinas, boat yards, general permits for special events, well permits, regional water supply planning, and agriculture water supply demand projections.

The bill passed by a vote of 4-2 and will next be heard in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government.

The House companion, HB 999 by Representative Jimmy Patronis (R-Panama City) was discussed in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee later in the day. AIF stood in support and the bill passed by a vote of 9-3 and will next be heard in the House State Affairs Committee.

AIF supports Senator Altman & Rep. Patronis' effort to help streamline the permitting process for Florida's businesses.

Also in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, AIF stood in support of HB 1393, *Relating to Agricultural Storage and Shipping*, by Representative Halsey Beshears (R-Monticello). This bill expands the current laws protecting owners of certain containers to include those used for storage and transportation of agricultural or other commodities. It expands protection to owners of plastic bulk containers and certain criminal penalties are provided.

The bill passed by a vote of 12-0 and will next be heard in the House State Affairs Committee.

AIF supports this legislation because companies are experiencing theft of their agriculture containers and expanded penalties in the bill will address this problem.

Insurance

The Senate Committee on Judiciary met and discussed SB 706, *Relating to Uninsured Motorist Insurance Coverage*, by Senator Bill Montford (D-Tallahassee). The bill reverses a recent court decision which deleted the option for the purchaser of an automobile insurance policy to sign a waiver of rights to combine policy limits from multiple vehicles for uninsured motorists (UM) coverage. By restoring this option, the bill allows businesses and other purchasers of UM coverage who exercise this option to save 20% or more in premiums.

The bill passed by a vote of 6-1 and will next be heard in the Senate Committee on Rules.

AIF supports the passage of legislation improving the regulatory environment for insurers and reducing the cost of insurance to businesses.

Telecommunications

In the Senate Committee on Judiciary, AIF stood in support of SB 52, *Relating to the Use of Wireless Communications Devices While Driving*, by Senator Nancy Detert (R-Venice). The bill provides for secondary enforcement of a ban on texting-while-driving. Specifically, a driver must be first pulled over for a violation of another traffic law before that driver may be cited for violating the texting-while-driving ban.

Also, graduated penalties and exceptions are provided. Further, the bill allows for a driver may still text when legally parked. The bill also provides that a driver's wireless billing records and testimony from those receiving messages are admissible as evidence in a proceeding to determine whether a violation has been committed. Like its House companion, HB 13, this bill also now applies to the use of tablets as well as wireless cell-phones. The bill may generate additional revenues for local and state governments as a result of the penalties.

The bill passed unopposed and will next be heard before the full Senate.

AIF supports SB 52 because it will effectively decrease automobile accidents thus lowering insurance costs for Florida's businesses.

Workforce

In the Senate Committee on Judiciary, AIF stood in support of SB 726, *Relating to Regulation of Family or Medical Leave Benefits for Employees*, by Senator David Simmons (R-Altamonte Springs). SB 726 creates a task force to analyze employer sponsored family or medical leave benefits and the impact of state preemption of the regulation of such benefits. Further, the legislation prohibits local governments from passing any mandatory sick leave ordinances, ensuring that we will avoid a scenario where businesses could face 67 different rules and mandates in 67 different counties.

An amendment introduced by Senator Arthenia Joyner (D-Tampa) failed in committee. Senator Joyner's amendment would remove the preemption found within the underlying legislation once the task force created in the bill is completed with its work. **AIF is opposed to the amendment.**

After extensive public testimony, the bill passed by a vote of 6-3 and will next be heard before the full Senate.

AIF supports providing one uniform law with which all businesses in Florida will be required to comply. Preemption guarantees that we will have uniformity in the labor market in Florida.

Energy

The Senate Committee on Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities unanimously passed SB 1472, *Relating to Nuclear and Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle Power Plants*, by Senator John Legg (R-Lutz). Through an amendment by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-New Port Richey) and two amendments to the amendment by Senator Anitere Flores (R-Miami) and Senator Simpson, the bill, as a committee substitute (CS):

- Breaks the preconstruction period into licensing and other preconstruction, and limits the types of costs that could be recovered during the licensing phase;
- Requires the Public Service Commission (PSC) find that the projected costs for the plant are reasonable and that there is still a need for the plant, prior to the preconstruction phase and the construction phase;
- Provides that in order to preserve the opportunity for future cost recovery, a utility must begin construction within ten years after the date on which it obtains a license or petition the PSC and evidence ongoing intent to build the plant;
- Establishes that twenty years after the date a utility obtains a license, the utility may not recover future costs relating to that plant;
- Adds a “prudency review” by the PSC if the date has been extended for more than six years, or the costs of the plant have risen by more than fifty percent; and
- Deletes the provision of an automatic repeal in the original bill.

Currently, AIF does not have a position on the bill, but is monitoring it because it could have generational consequences to both users and ratepayers as well as to the returns for some of Florida’s largest corporations.