



DAILY BRIEF

From January 13, 2016

ENVIRONMENT & AGRICULTURE

SB 552- Relating to Environmental Resources

On Wednesday, January 13th, **SB 552**, relating to Environmental Resources, by **Senator Charlie Dean (R-Inverness)** was heard on the floor of the Senate and passed unanimously with 37 yeas and 0 nays.

The Department of Environmental Protection projects a water shortage of 1.3 billion gallons of water per day by 2030. This bill comprehensively addresses this shortage and other water issues in our state. SB 552 revises policies relation to Florida's environmental resources including, but not limited to:

- Creating the Florida Springs and Aquifer Protection Act to expedite protection and restoration of the water flow and water quality in the aquifer and Outstanding Florida Springs.
- Ensuring that the appropriate governmental entities continue to develop and implement uniform water supply planning, consumptive water use permitting, and resource protection programs for the area encompassed by the Central Florida Water Initiative.
- Updating and restructuring the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Act to reflect and build upon the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) completion of basin management action plans (BMAP) for Lake Okeechobee, the Caloosahatchee Estuary, and the St. Lucie River and Estuary, DEP's continuing development of a BMAP for the inland portion of the Caloosahatchee River watershed, and Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' implementation of best management practices in the three basins.
- Modifying water supply and resource planning documents and processes in order to provide more robust representations of the state's water needs and goals.
- Requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to conduct an annual assessment of water resources and conservation lands.
- Requiring DEP to publish an online publicly accessible database of conservation lands on which public access is compatible with conservation and recreation purposes.
- Requiring DEP to conduct a feasibility study for creating and maintaining a web-based, interactive map of the state's waterbodies as well as regulatory information about each waterbody.

SB 552 will now head to the House chamber for a vote.

AIF supports efforts to address Florida's major water challenges by developing sound, comprehensive science-based water policy.

Below is a press release from our Florida H2O Coalition regarding the passage of SB 552:

**Statement from AIF's H2O Coalition Regarding the Bipartisan
Passage of Comprehensive Water Reform in the Florida Senate**

Tallahassee, Fla. – Associated Industries of Florida's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs Brewster Bevis released the following statement regarding the Florida Senate's bipartisan approval of a comprehensive water reform bill.

“The Florida Senate’s adoption of SB 552 has been many years in the making. Over the past year, this legislation has been improved to strengthen the protection of Florida’s springs and create stronger water quality standards. Today, a unanimous, bipartisan majority has agreed this comprehensive approach to water policy represents the best path forward for our people and our state.

We appreciate the leadership of President Gardiner and Senators Dean, Simmons, Hays, Simpson, and Montford. Their tireless work on this bill has put us one step closer to passing this historic reform.”

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HB 59-Relating to Agritourism

On Wednesday, January 13th, **HB 59**, relating to Agritourism, **Rep. Neil Combee (R-Auburndale)** was heard in the **House State Affairs Committee** and unanimously passed with a vote of 18 yeas and 0 nays.

This bill prohibits local governments from enforcing any local ordinance, regulation, rule, or policy that prohibits, restricts, regulates, or otherwise limits an agritourism activity on land classified as agricultural land under Florida’s greenbelt law. An “agritourism activity” is any agricultural related activity consistent with a bona fide farm or ranch or in a working forest that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy activities, including farming, ranching, historical, cultural, or harvest-your-own activities and attractions. Agritourism is one of the many methods farmers use to diversify and increase their income.

HB 59 will now head to the House Floor for a vote.

AIF supports any legislation that allows Florida farmers to safely expand their businesses through the use of Agritourism.

ENERGY

SB 318- Relating to Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources

On Wednesday, January 13th, **SB 318**, relating to Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources, by **Senator Garrett Richter (R-Naples)** was heard in the **Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee** and passed with 6 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in support of this bill.**

SB 318 makes many revisions to the Oil and Gas Program (program) to make this program safer and more effective for all involved. The Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Mining and Minerals Regulation Program in the Division of Water Resource Management (Division) oversees permitting for oil and gas drilling, production, and exploration within Florida through its Oil and Gas Program. The Program’s primary responsibilities include conservation of oil and gas resources, correlative rights protection, maintenance of health and human safety, and environmental protection.

The next committee stop for SB 318 will be in the **Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government.**

AIF supports the need to maintain appropriate permitting laws to protect the environment, to enhance efficiency between industry and the state, and to ensure appropriate standards are clearly communicated.

AIF released this statement regarding the passage of SB 318:

**AIF Statement on Passage of SB 318 in the
Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation & Conservation**

Tallahassee, Fla. – The **Associated Industries of Florida** (AIF) today released the following statement attributable to its Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs Brewster Bevis regarding the passage of Senate Bill 318, sponsored by Senator Garrett Richter (R-Naples), in the Environmental Preservation & Conservation Committee. “We applaud the members of the Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation & Conservation for passing SB 318 today and for having a thoughtful, fact-driven discussion on this topic. AIF is supportive of this measure, as we believe it is a strong regulatory bill which would institute commonsense policies to govern the onshore oil and gas industry, including creating an additional level of oversight for advanced techniques, above and beyond what is in place now, to ensure Florida’s environment is preserved for future generations.

“The oil and gas industry has been operating in the State of Florida for more than seven decades safely, contributing to the state’s bottom line, creating jobs and lessening our dependence on foreign sources of oil; and, for these reasons, AIF firmly believes it should be allowed to continue to operate within the regulatory framework that SB 318 creates.

“While we do have reservations regarding the proposed study in the bill, we do thank Senator Garret Richter for his continued commitment to this important issue and look forward to working with him as this legislation progresses through the legislative process.”

For more information on AIF, please visit **AIF.com** and follow **@VoiceofFLBiz**.

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LEGAL & JUDICIAL

HB 267- Relating to Public Records/State –Funded Infrastructure Bank

On Wednesday, January 13th, **HB 267**, relating to Public Records/State-Funded Infrastructure Bank, by **Rep. Mike LaRosa (R-Saint Cloud)** was heard by the **House Government Operations Subcommittee** and passed with 9 yeas and 1 nay.

Currently, the state-funded infrastructure bank (SIB) is housed within Department of Transportation (department). The SIB provides loans and credit enhancements to public and private entities for constructing and improving transportation facilities. This bill creates a public record exemption for the financial statements or other financial information that is required for the application to the SIB. However, the public records exemption does not apply to the financial records of an applicant who is in default of an SIB loan.

This exemption is subject to the Open Government Sunset Review Act and will be repealed on October 2, 2021 unless this bill is reenacted by the Legislature.

The next committee stop for HB 267 will be in the **House Economic Affairs Committee**.

AIF supports protecting the financial information of private companies.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

HB 613- Relating to Workers’ Compensation System Administration

On Wednesday, January 13th, **HB 613**, relating to Workers’ Compensation System Administration, by **Rep. Jennifer Sullivan (R-Eustis)** was heard in the **House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee** and passed with 9 yeas and 3 nays. **AIF’s General Counsel, Tammy Perdue, testified on this bill.**

HB 613 passed with a commitment from the sponsor to resolve concerns raised by the business community that this bill could result in uninsured LLC members. AIF is working with legislators today in **House Insurance & Banking**

Subcommittee on a bill that will update some of the tools and procedures available to the Division of Workers' Compensation to allow them to continue operating our self-executing system. Perdue commented that "While AIF identified some technical concerns with the current language in HB 613, we are confident that Rep. Sullivan will continue working with us to craft language that does not inadvertently permit employers to avoid properly securing workers' comp coverage for their employees and allows the Division to secure the tools it needs for successful administration."

AIF continues to lead Florida businesses in safeguarding the delicate balance needed for a successful workers' compensation system. **The House Rulemaking Oversight & Repeal** committee took a long-awaited step with a PCB to ratify reimbursement schedules for health care providers rendering treatment to injured workers. According to AIF General Counsel, Tammy Perdue "This measure is necessary to be certain that employers are able to provide their employees with the best medical treatment to get them well and back to work safely and quickly, and to keep our system current with national standards."

The next step for this bill will be the **House Government Operations Appropriations Subcommittee**.

AIF supports Florida's current workers' compensation law and any proposed change to the workers' compensation system- in the courtroom or Legislature- will be evaluated through the prism of coverage affordability, market stability, and employee safety.

TRANSPORTATION

HB 509- Relating to Transportation Network Companies

On Wednesday, January 13th, **HB 509**, relating to Transportation Network Companies, by **Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Shalimar)** was heard in the **House Economic Affairs Committee** and passed with 13 yeas and 2 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

HB 509 allows for statewide regulation of ridesharing companies. This will unharness technology companies like Uber from draconian local ordinances, and also represents a compromise between ridesharing and insurance stakeholders to ensure appropriate commercial coverage is in place for the benefit of drivers and passengers.

The next stop for HB 509 will be on the House Floor.

AIF supports statewide digital transportation service policies to create price competition, promote consumer choice, enhance customer experience, create jobs and remove anti-competitive local regulations.