



DAILY BRIEF

From January 14, 2016

ENVIRONMENT & AGRICULTURE

SB 552 & HB 7005-Relating to Environmental Resources

On Thursday, January 14th, AIF's priority legislation, **HB 7005**, relating to Environmental Resources, by **Rep. Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres)** was heard on the House floor laid on the table and substituted for **SB 552** by **Senator Charlie Dean (R-Inverness)**. SB 552 was then read for a third time on the House floor and a vote was taken, passing SB 552 out of the House Chamber with a vote of 110 yeas to 2 nays.

This comprehensive water legislation addresses our states impending water shortage issues and takes the first step in ensuring that Florida's springs and precious water sources are protected. SB 552 revises policies in 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 go to Governor Scott's desk to be signed into law.

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

AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, released a statement congratulating our Legislature for taking the first monumental step in protecting Florida's waters:

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

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

"Today is a historic day for Florida. Floridians should be proud of the leadership demonstrated by House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, Senate President Andy Gardiner, Representative Matt Caldwell, Senator Charlie Dean and Commissioner Adam Putnam in passing a comprehensive water policy that should serve as a model for other states.

If enacted, the impact of this comprehensive water policy will be far-reaching and felt long after the members of this body are in office. Future generations of Floridians will remember the 2016 Legislative Session as the time when lawmakers upgraded our water policy with higher water quality standards, stronger protections for our springs, and a forward-thinking approach that integrates water planning into economic development.

As this bill goes to Governor Scott's desk for his consideration, I join representatives from Florida's business, environmental and agricultural communities in urging him to sign it. The future of Florida's water supply depends on it."

SB 304- Agritourism

On Thursday, January 14th, **SB 304**, relating to Agritourism, sponsored by **Senator Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland)** was heard in the **Senate Fiscal Policy Committee** and passed with 9 yeas and 1 nay. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

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.

SB 304 will proceed to the Senate floor for a vote.

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

TAXATION

SB 802- Relating to Use Tax for Asphalt

On Thursday, January 14th, **SB 802**, relating to Use Tax for Asphalt, sponsored by **Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto (R-Fort Myers)** was heard in the **Senate Transportation Committee** and unanimously passed with 6 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

SB 802 will phase out the tax on manufactured asphalt used for any federal, state, or local government public works project, which under current law this tax is reduced by 40 percent.

SB 802 will further reduce the tax on manufactured asphalt by 60 percent beginning July 1, 2016; by 80 percent beginning July 1, 2017; and by 100 percent beginning July 1, 2018.

The next committee stop for this SB 802 will be in the **Senate Finance and Tax Committee.**

AIF supports phasing out tax on road projects used for federal, state, or local government work.