



DAILY BRIEF

From January 21, 2016

WATER

Today, Governor Scott, signed **SB 552**, an act relating to Environmental Resources, into law. With Amendment 1 passing on the 2014 ballot, Legislators knew that passing a water package that alleviated all of Florida's water issues would be no easy task. This comprehensive water package is the first step of many in protecting Florida's most precious resource. Thoughtfulness, care, and much consideration is needed for a process such as this, and AIF would like to applaud our Legislature for exemplifying just that.

AIF's Brewster Bevis, who tirelessly supported SB 552 all the way to the finish line, was invited to see the signing of this legislation by Governor Scott.

Along with many other of Florida's business and association leaders, our President and CEO, Tom Feeney, released this statement on the signing of SB 552:

**Florida Leaders Applaud Governor Scott for
Signing Comprehensive Water Policy Reform into Law**

Tallahassee, FL – Following Governor Rick Scott's approval of SB 552 – the most comprehensive water policy reform enacted in decades – Florida leaders expressed strong support and issued the following statements about the law:

Tom Feeney, President and CEO of Associated Industries of Florida

"Florida has taken a monumental leap forward in addressing our water quality and quantity challenges by enacting this comprehensive water policy reform. Today's bill signing is the culmination of many years of hard work and compromise from the business and environmental communities to develop a necessary water policy that will serve our state well in the coming decades. The result of these efforts was a bipartisan bill supported overwhelmingly by the Florida Legislature. On behalf of the Associated Industries of Florida and the H2O Coalition, we thank Governor Scott for signing this bill into law and for his commitment to creating a sustainable strategy that preserves and protects Florida's most precious natural resource."

Carol Dover, President and CEO of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association

"We commend Governor Scott for recognizing the need for a statewide water strategy, which is absolutely essential to ensure the growth of Florida's economy and specifically, our hospitality industry. Access to clean drinking water is vital for families across the state and ensures our restaurants, hotels and attractions will continue to offer exceptional experiences for residents and visitors alike."

Bill Herrle, National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) Florida Executive Director

"Governor Scott's approval of this bill is yet another positive step toward preparing Florida for future economic growth. As we have seen in states like California, which has been unprepared to handle its current water shortage, a failure to adopt a comprehensive water policy can be economically damaging. We applaud Governor Scott for taking this responsible approach to the conservation and protection of Florida's natural resources."

Butch Calhoun, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association Director of Government Relations

"On behalf of Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, our growers applaud Governor Scott for approving this landmark water bill, which takes a long-term, comprehensive approach to water management and the protection of our natural resources. Our growers are stewards of the land we serve and we understand the importance of having access to an abundant water supply. By adopting this legislation, Governor Scott and the Legislature have ensured the practices employed by our growers

are aligned to help our state find science-based, economically feasible solutions to water quality and quantity issues which work to protect Florida's unique and diverse ecosystems."

Barbara Sharief, President, Florida Association of Counties & Vice Mayor of Broward County

"Florida's counties would like to thank Governor Scott for signing this comprehensive water bill. A Florida Association of Counties priority, this bill takes a significant step towards much needed springs protection and finding solutions for faulty septic tanks. Water is the lifeblood of Florida's environment and economy and we are pleased that the Governor, legislators and county commissioners came together to protect her future."

Barbara Miedema, VP for Public Affairs & Communications at Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative

"We applaud Governor Scott for his quick action in signing this most important piece of legislation. The bipartisan work of the Legislature represents the most comprehensive re-write of Florida water law since the 1970s. It signals that the process is working in Tallahassee and things are getting done for the benefit of all Floridians."

John Hoblick, President of the Florida Farm Bureau

"Florida Farm Bureau thanks Governor Rick Scott for approving SB 552, an historic and comprehensive water policy plan for the state of Florida. Water is a vital and necessary resource for our state's agricultural producers. We appreciate Gov. Scott's commitment to preserving our natural resources while providing adequate and clean water to agriculture so that we may continue to produce the most affordable, safe and abundant food supply in the world."

Ben Bolusky, CEO Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association

"We appreciate Governor Scott signing this critical bill into law. Creating sustainability for Florida's water supply is important for the businesses that make up Florida's \$15.3 billion nursery and landscape industry. On behalf of the members of the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA), we commend Governor Scott for signing this good bill into law."

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ENERGY

HB 191- Relating to Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources

On Thursday, January 21st, **HB 191**, relating to Regulation of Oil and Gas Resources, by **Rep. Ray Rodrigues (R-Fort Myers)** passed through the **House State Affairs Committee** with 12 yeas and 6 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, spoke in support of this bill.**

This bill 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. In the state of Florida, according to state statutes, high pressure well-stimulation is already a legal practice. This regulatory program would amend said statute to include safer practices for conservation of oil and gas resources, correlative rights protection, maintenance of health and human safety, and environmental protection. High pressure well-stimulation will happen regardless of HB 191, the goal is to make this practice safer for all Floridians involved.

HB 191 will go to the House floor for consideration.

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 the following statement on the passing of HB 191 in today's committee:

AIF Statement on Onshore Oil & Gas Legislation Advancing in Florida House

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 House Bill 191, sponsored by Representative Ray Rodrigues (R-Estero), which advanced in the Florida House following its passage in the State Affairs Committee.

"Representative Rodrigues, who is unparalleled in his knowledge and commitment to properly regulating the onshore oil and gas industry, has worked in good faith with all third parties to produce sound legislation that, we feel, strikes the appropriate balance to protect and preserve Florida's environment, while also allowing a responsible industry to continue to explore and produce oil and gas here in the Sunshine State.

"We do continue to have reservations about the inclusion of a study, as this industry has been a responsible producer of oil and gas for more than seven decades, which has led to jobs, diversification of our energy portfolio and a reduced reliance on foreign sources of energy; but, overall, we believe this good bill will bring needed regulatory clarity to this industry.

"We thank Representative Rodrigues, as well as members of the House State Affairs Committee for carefully considering and passing this legislation today."

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LEGAL & JUDICIAL

HB 273- Relating to Public Records

On Thursday, January 21st, **HB 273**, relating to Public Records, by **Rep. Halsey Beshears (R-Monticello)** was considered by the **House State Affairs Committee** and passed with 15 yeas and 1 nay. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

This bill addresses the procedure for obtaining records relating to a public agency's contract for services with a private contractor. As it stands today, the Florida Constitution provides every person the right to inspect or copy any public record made or received in connection with the official business of any public body, officer, or employee of the state, or of persons acting on their behalf.

However, the issue is who the party responsible for providing these public records is. If this bill becomes law, requests for records relating to a public agency's contract for services must be made to the contracting agency. An agency who receives a request for records possessed by a contractor must then attempt to obtain the records from the contractor.

HB 273 also provides that if a civil action is filed to compel production of public records, the court must assess and award against the contractor the reasonable costs of enforcement, including attorney fees, if the court determines that a contractor unlawfully refused to comply with the public records request within a reasonable time, and the plaintiff provided written notice of the public records request to the public agency and the contractor. The notice must be sent at least 8 business days before the plaintiff files the civil action. The bill specifies that a contractor who complies with the public records request within 8 business days after the notice is sent is not liable for the reasonable costs of enforcement.

This bill will now head to the House floor for consideration.

AIF supports legislation that reduces frivolous law suits against Florida businesses.