



From April 14, 2017

ENVIRONMENT

SB 10-Relating to Water Resources

On Wednesday, April 12th, SB 10, by Senator Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park) was read for a third time on the floor of the Senate and passed by a vote of 36 yeas to 3 nays. **AIF stood in opposition to this legislation.**

This bill, after amended in its previous committee hearing, now authorizes the construction of a reservoir below Lake Okeechobee ONLY on the land the state already owns in an attempt to remedy the pollution flowing east and west of the lake. While the amended bill takes the issue of eminent domain off the table and protects the farm lands crucial to the economic development in the glades, AIF remains concerned with the solution to only address the water storage issues south of Lake Okeechobee.

SB 10 will go to the House floor for consideration.

AIF OPPOSES this legislation as we do not believe that ONLY addressing the issue of water storage south of Lake Okeechobee will resolve the issue of excess water discharged from the lake.

LEGAL & JUDICIAL

SB 388-Relating to Beverage Law

On Wednesday, April 12th, SB 388, by Senator Travis Hutson (R-Palm Coast), was heard before the Senate Committee on Rules and passed by a unanimous vote of 12 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

Florida's "Tied House Evil Law," s. 561.42, F.S., prohibits a manufacturer or distributor of alcoholic beverages from having a financial interest, directly or indirectly, in the establishment or business of a licensed vendor, and prohibits a manufacturer or distributor from giving gifts, loans, property, or rebates to retail vendors.

The bill exempts financial transactions between a vendor and a manufacturer from all tied evil house prohibitions if the following conditions are met:

- The financial transaction must be negotiated at arm's length for fair market value between a manufacturer of beer or malt beverages, and
- The financial transaction cannot involve, either all or in part, the direct sale or distribution of beer or malt beverages between the manufacturer and the licensed vendor.

SB 388 will now go to the Senate floor to be heard.

AIF SUPPORTS this legislation because it would remove unnecessary and outdated regulations on Florida's businesses.

TAXATION

SB 76-Relating to Limitations on Property Tax Assessments

On Wednesday, April 12th, SB 76, by Senator Tom Lee (R-Brandon) was heard in the Senate Committee on Rules and passed unanimously by a vote of 12 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

In 2008, Florida voters approved Amendment 1 which, among other things, created a 10% cap on the annual increase of property taxes for all non-homestead properties. However, this amendment included a sunset provision that goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2019. SB 76 proposes a constitutional amendment be added to the ballot during the 2018 General Election to let the voters decide in making this cap 10% tax cap permanent.

SB 76 will now go to the Senate floor to be heard.

AIF SUPPORTS a permanent 10% property tax cap on second homes and commercial property.

INSURANCE

SB 1582 -Relating to Workers' Compensation Insurance

On Thursday, April 13th, SB 1582, by Senator Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park), was heard before the Senate Committee on Appropriations and passed by a vote of 16 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in opposition to this bill.**

This legislation seeks to address the issues within Florida's Workers' Compensation law that have deemed the law unconstitutional; specifically the issue of rate increases, attorney fees, claimant benefits, etc. While AIF applauds Senator Bradley for his continues hard work on this delicate issue, we are confident that there is a solution that will address all aspects of the workers' compensation system in Florida so that Floridians can avoid unnecessary, costly and

time consuming litigation and receive the benefits they need if injured at work as quickly as possible.

SB 1582 will move on to the Senate Committee on Rules for its next hearing.

AIF OPPOSES this piece of legislation as it does not adequately address the rising cost of workers' compensation rates on Florida's employers due to increased costs of attorney fees.

AGRICULTURE

SB 1536-Relating to Agricultural Practices

On Thursday, April 13th, SB 1536, by Senator Keith Perry (R-Gainesville), was heard by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Finance and Tax and passed by a vote of 4 yeas to 1 nay. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This bill clarifies that livestock, poultry and aquaculture medical supplies are exempt from sales tax. The bill repeals a supplemental pesticide registration fee which was added to bi-annual pesticide registrations. The bill also expands the travel radius limitations on the state restricted agricultural tag from "150" miles to statewide.

SB 1536 will now go to the Senate Committee on Appropriations to be heard.

AIF SUPPORTS the various provisions of this bill which help our agricultural industry remain competitive and continue to be a driving force in Florida's economy.

HB 5401-Pesticide Registration

On Thursday, April 13th, HB 5401, by the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee and Representative Chuck Clemons (R-Jonesville), was read for a third time on the House floor and passed unanimously by a vote of 115 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this bill.**

This legislation repeals a supplemental pesticide registration fee on certain products sold in Florida. The supplemental fee was established in 2009 as a mechanism to boost state revenue and help balance the budget.

HB 5401 will go on to the Senate floor to be heard.

AIF SUPPORTS this legislation which removes a duplicative fee on businesses.

EDUCATION

SB 668-Relating to Postsecondary Distance Education

On Thursday, April 13th, SB 668, by Senator Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville), was heard by Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education and passed unanimously by a vote of 5 yeas to 0 nays. **AIF's Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this bill.**

This legislation seeks to authorize Florida's participation in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement known as "SARA" created by the Southern Regional Education Board and the National Council on State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. This would allow for Florida's postsecondary institutions to voluntarily participate in what is a multi-state reciprocity agreement allowing them to offer online education without excessive fees and regulatory compliance processes. This reciprocity offers student's greater access to more distance education, enhances oversight of distance education offerings to Florida students by another state, and expands experiential learning opportunities across state lines. Not only is this good for students but it also helps lessen the burden on Florida businesses and taxpayers to fund construction and facility costs.

SB 668 will move on to the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

AIF SUPPORTS our state university system's continued efforts to address the growing challenges that comes with increased enrollment, which in turn increases the workforce throughout Florida.