

# DAILY BRIEF

*For the 2021 Legislative Session*



**FROM MARCH 18, 2021**

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **SB 88 - Relating to Farming Operations**

On Thursday, March 18, [SB 88](#) by Senator Jason Brodeur (R-Sanford) was read a third time on the Senate floor and passed with 37 yeas and 1 nay.

The bill amends and strengthens the Florida Right to Farm Act, which is intended to protect reasonable agricultural activities conducted on farmland from nuisance lawsuits. The bill provides stronger liability protections to farms that comply with best management practices and environmental regulations, and:

- Adds Agritourism to the list of practices protected by the Right to Farm Act;
- Institutes parameters regarding punitive and compensatory damages; and
- Limits eligibility to file a lawsuit to individuals located within one half mile of the activity.

SB 88 will now go to the House for consideration.

**AIF supports legislation that protects Florida's farmers and helps to eradicate bad faith litigation which drives up the cost of doing business, insurance rates, and negatively affects those providing food and resources to the state.**

## **LEGAL & JUDICIAL**

### **HB 35 - Relating to Legal Notices**

On Thursday, March 18, [HB 35](#) by Representative Randy Fine (R-Palm Bay) was read a second and third time on the House floor and passed with 85 yeas and 35 nays.

The Florida Constitution requires that public notice be given for meetings at which official acts are to be taken or where public business is to be conducted. All meetings of a county, municipality, school board, or special district at which official acts are to be taken or at which public business is

to be discussed or transacted must be open to the public and notice must be given. All legal notices and publications must be made in a newspaper that meets the following qualifications:

- Published at least once a week;
- At least 25% of its words are in English;
- Considered a periodical by the post office;
- For sale to the general public; and
- Contains information of interest or value to the general public in the affected area

The bill would allow a governmental agency the option to deviate from print and publish legally required advertisements and notices, such as impending sale of real property, on a publicly accessible website.

HB 35 will now go to the Senate for consideration.

**AIF opposes internet-only public notice, as it eliminates the wide net created by print media and the internet combined. Webpages are present one day and gone the next; the internet is an inherently unreliable platform for critical information.**

## **SB 72 – Relating to Civil Liability for Damages Relating to COVID-19**

On Thursday, March 18, [SB 72](#) by Senator Jeff Brandes (R-St. Petersburg) was read a second time, amended, and read a third time on the Senate floor and passed with 24 yeas and 15 nays.

The bill provides civil immunity from COVID-19 liability to businesses, educational institutions, religious institutions, governmental entities, health care providers, and other covered entities that acted in good faith during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill protects reasonably acting entities and institutions so that they can predict their COVID-19-related litigation risks, remain viable, and continue to contribute to the state's well-being.

SB 72 will now go to the House for consideration.

**AIF supports legislation that protects the Florida business community from frivolous and costly litigation by plaintiffs suing to settle that drives up the cost of doing business and deters further economic growth in the state.**

## TAXATION

### **SB 982 – Relating to Tax Refund Program for Qualified Target Industry Businesses**

On Thursday, March 18, [SB 982](#) by Senator Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota) was heard by the Senate Finance and Tax Committee and was reported favorable with 8 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF’s Legislative Affairs Assistant, BD Jogerst, stood in support of this legislation.**

The Qualified Target Industry (QTI) Tax Refund Program was created by the Legislature to encourage the creation and retention of high-quality, high-wage jobs by providing a state grant equal to the amount paid for certain state and local taxes to eligible businesses creating jobs in target industries. The bill reauthorizes the QTI Tax Refund Program by repealing the June 30, 2020 deadline for applicants to be certified for the program.

SB 982 will now go to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

**AIF supports QTI legislation that encourages economic investment in Florida, creates additional jobs, and will continue to drive Florida’s business friendly climate.**

## TRANSPORTATION

### **SB 100 – Relating to Highway Projects**

On Thursday, March 18, [SB 100](#) by Senator Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) was heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee and was reported favorable with 17 yeas and 2 nays. **AIF’s Senior Vice President of State and Federal Affairs, Brewster Bevis, stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill repeals the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) Program but retains the associated funding within the State Transportation Trust Fund. The bill draws on the recommendations of the M-CORES task forces and prioritizes strategic improvements to existing highway facilities. The bill builds on a primary focus of the M-CORES task forces to maximize the use of existing facilities to evaluate existing roadways or portions of existing roadways for development, upgrades, and improvements.

SB 100 will now go to the Senate floor for consideration.

**AIF supports efforts to reassess and update Florida’s existing roadway infrastructure that businesses rely on to move products and resources which further drives economic development in the state.**