



# WEEKLY UPDATE

*Legislative Session*



## FROM APRIL 21, 2023

The seventh week of the 2023 Legislative Session has come to a close. The legislature moved quickly this week to move several priority bills out of committee and to the floor of their respective chambers. With only two weeks left of Session, the countdown is on to wrap up the budget and accomplish the policy priorities of the legislature this Session.

On Tuesday, the Senate Finance and Tax Committee passed its version of the tax package. Last week, the House version was passed out of committee. These bills consolidate several tax bills that were moving through the process into one. AIF supports many of the provisions in the House and Senate versions.

For more information on the bills that the AIF Advocacy Team worked on this week, please see below!

### CIVIL JUSTICE

#### **SB 1002 - Relating to Motor Vehicle Glass.**

On Wednesday, April 19, [SB 1002](#) by Senator Linda Stewart (D-Orlando) was amended and passed on the Senate Floor. The amendment makes the proposed law go into effect upon approval by the Governor instead of on July 1, 2023. The amendment passed by a voice vote. The bill was reported favorably with 40 yeas and 0 nays.

This bill provides that a motor vehicle repair shop may not offer a customer a rebate, gift, gift card, cash, coupon, or other item of value in exchange for making an insurance claim for motor vehicle glass replacement or repair. The bill also prohibits the assignment of benefits for auto glass repairs.

SB 1002 has no further action in the Senate. The House companion, HB 541, awaits consideration on the House Floor.

**AIF supports efforts by the legislature to bring more transparency and fairness in the auto repair market between insurance providers and policy holders. Litigation should not be auctioned off frivolously when the alternative is better for the policy holder in the long run.**

**For more information on AIF's efforts relating to Tort Reform, please visit [AIF | Tort Reform](#).**

## TAXATION

### SB 7062 - Relating to Taxation

On Tuesday, April 18, [SB 7062](#), a proposed committee bill by the Senate Finance & Tax Committee was heard for the first time and was reported favorably with 9 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

SB 7062 is the Senate's tax package that has many pieces that are friendly to Florida businesses. SB 7062 draws inspiration from several bills relating to taxation that have been moving throughout the process this year as well as incorporating many consumer-friendly items contained in Governor DeSantis' tax cut proposal.

This bill creates several sales tax holidays for various products and events as well as permanent exemptions for items such as baby and toddler products, diapers and incontinence products, oral hygiene products and firearm safety devices.

SB 7062 incorporates provisions from other bills that AIF has already been supporting this session:

- SB 844/HB 867 - Providing a sales tax exemption for machinery and equipment used in the production of renewable natural gas. (This is also included in the House tax package.)
- SB 322/HB 529 - Extending sales tax exemptions on natural gas fuel taxes until January 1st, 2026, rather than the current deadline in 2024. (This is also included in the House tax package.)

- HB 1153/SB 1432 - Providing that no local communications services tax rates may be increased until 2026. (This is also included in the House tax package.)
- HB 1343/SB 1184 - Prohibiting local governments from applying special assessments on agricultural lands (This was NOT included in the House tax package.)

HB 7063 is the House tax package and was passed out of the House Ways and Means Committee last Wednesday, April 12.

Among other things, SB 7062 offers similar “sales tax holidays” with fairly minor differences related to “back to school”; “disaster preparedness”; “Freedom Summer”; “Tools used by skilled trade workers”; and “ENERGY STAR appliances”. There are some differences in each category regarding types of sales that are exempted along with various value limitations. Both bills include property tax relief for residential and commercial property owners in Southwest Florida impacted by Hurricane Ian.

One item in particular that was included in the House bill but not the Senate bill was the provision that would lower the business rent tax rate from 5.5% to 4.5%. AIF will be working to support the inclusion of this provision as the bills are negotiated between the chambers.

SB 7062 will be heard next by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday, April 25. The House companion, HB 7063, has been placed on the House Calendar.

**AIF supports legislative efforts to provide tax relief on all businesses operating in Florida. These incentives drive future investment and create a well-rounded, vibrant economy that creates jobs and lowers costs for consumers.**

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **HB 1279/SB 1164– Relating to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

On Monday, April 17, [HB 1279](#) by Representative Danny Alvarez (R-Fishhawk) was heard by the House Infrastructure Strategies Committee and was reported favorably with 18 yeas and 0 nays. On Thursday, April 20, [SB 1164](#) by Senator Jay Collins (R-Tampa) was heard by the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee and reported favorably with 19 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

This bill primarily creates a program for sales tax exemptions for production materials used by agricultural producers. The program will allow farmers to apply for and use a Farm Tax Exempt

Agricultural Materials (TEAM) card to receive the exemptions. This program works similarly in Georgia and is beneficial to the agriculture community there as well. The bill requires state agencies, universities, and colleges to give preference to food commodities grown or produced in Florida under certain purchasing agreements. Among other mostly technical changes, the bill also revises and eliminates several advisory councils under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

SB 1164 will now go to the Senate Floor for consideration. The House companion, HB 1279, awaits further consideration on the House Floor.

**AIF supports sales tax exemptions for Florida’s agricultural producers and efforts to make these exemptions easier to access. “If you eat, you’re involved in agriculture.” Lowering costs for agricultural producers trickles down to lower prices for the consumer.**

## TRANSPORTATION

### HB 1191- Relating to Use of Phosphogypsum

On Monday, April 17, [HB 1191](#) by Representative Lawrence McClure (R-Dover) was heard by the House Infrastructure Strategies Committee and was reported favorably with 14 yeas and 5 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

HB 1191 directs the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to experiment the use of Phosphogypsum (PG) as a road construction aggregate material. Phosphate is produced at a rapid rate in Florida and PG is a byproduct of the manufacturing process. For every ton of phosphate manufactured, 5 tons of PG is made. PG is used primarily for agricultural purposes; however, it can also be used for roadway paving materials. HB 1191 would allow the first step to take place in determining PG’s viability as an aggregate to be used on Florida’s roadways.

HB 1191 will now go to the House Floor for consideration. The Senate counterpart, SB 1258, awaits further approval on the Senate Floor.

**AIF supports efforts to utilize manufacturing byproducts for beneficial purposes.**

## **SB 908- Unmanned Aircraft Systems Act of 2023**

On Wednesday, April 19, [SB 908](#) by Senator Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Miami) was heard by the Senate Rules Committee and was reported favorably with 18 yeas and 0 nays. On Thursday, April 20, HB 645 by Representative Robbie Brackett (R-Vero Beach) was heard on the House Floor and was reported favorably with 114 yeas and 0 nays. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill amends the definition of “critical infrastructure facility” to include a deepwater port or a railroad switching yard.

SB 908 will now go to the Senate Floor for consideration. HB 645 has no further action in the House.

**AIF supports adding greater protection for Florida’s deepwater ports and railyards by including them and their facilities as critical infrastructure in Florida law.**

## **LEGAL & JUDICIAL**

### **HB 593 – Relating to Criminal History Information.**

On Wednesday, April 19, [HB 593](#) by Representative Spencer Roach (R-Fort Myers) was heard by the House Judiciary Committee and was reported favorably with 18 yeas and 1 nay. **AIF stood in support of this legislation.**

The bill revises the process for a court-ordered sealing of a criminal record to allow a person to petition a court to seal a criminal history record if the record has been automatically sealed by the State of Florida and the subject of the sealed record presents a certificate of sealing issued by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

HB 593 will now go to the House Floor for consideration. The Senate counterpart, SB 376, awaits further consideration by the Senate Rules Committee.

**In order to prevent confusion and difficulty for employers and employees, AIF supports legislative efforts that allows individuals with sealed records at the State level to petition local government be sealed at the local level as well.**