



February 5, 2021

Third Committee Week of the 2021 Legislative Session

With less than one month until the start of the 2021 Legislative Session, Legislators gathered for chilly week in Tallahassee for the third committee week of the year. Today marks halfway through committee weeks, with two more consecutive weeks to go.

Upcoming committee meetings will be held on the weeks of February 8th and 15th. During committee weeks, the House and Senate will notice meetings seven days in advance with a full agenda of bills and topics to be discussed.

All members of the House and Senate and Staff will be tested for COVID-19 prior to committee week commitments.

IN A HURRY?

Click [here](#) to listen to this week's FAC-ish Podcast:
Legislative Update - all of the same legislative announcements, faster and easier than ever before!



COVID-19 AD HOC

COVID-19 Liability Protections Bill Passes Second House Committee

[HB7- Civil Liability for Damages Relating to COVID-19](#) by Representative McClure was heard in its second committee in the House Pandemics and Emergencies Committee on Wednesday. HB7 provides liability for businesses, educational entities, governmental entities, and religious institutions against COVID-19 claims. Under this bill, when a covered entity proves “good faith” evidence that it substantially complied with applicable COVID-19 guidelines, they are immune from civil liability from a COVID-19-related civil action.

The bill also provides that for any COVID-19-related civil action against a covered entity, a plaintiff must:

- Plead its complaint with particularity

- Submit, at the time of filing suit, a physician's affidavit confirming the physician's belief that the plaintiff's COVID-19-related injury occurred because of the defendant's conduct
- Prove, by clear and convincing evidence, that the defendant was grossly negligent

A COVID-19 related claim must be brought within one year after the action accrues, unless the claim accrued before the bill's effective date, which then allows the plaintiff to bring the civil action within one year after the bill takes effect. Representative Driskell filed an amendment that plaintiffs must present affidavit testimony from a medical expert and medical experts must be licensed in the state, but the amendment failed. While this bill does not include liability protections for healthcare providers, a separate Senate bill was filed this week. Senator Brandes filed [SB74](#) COVID-19 related Claims Against Healthcare Providers, to be heard in Senate Judiciary next Wednesday. HB7 passed with a vote of 11-6, and its final stop is Judiciary. Last week, its companion bill SB72 passed the Judiciary Committee and is headed to Commerce and Tourism.

Governor's Office Gives COVID-19 Federal Assistance Update

Both the Senate Appropriations Committee meeting on Tuesday and the House Appropriations Committee meeting on Wednesday, included an update on federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic by the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget (OPB). The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was enacted on March 27, 2020 in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) provides \$150 billion in direct assistance for states, tribal governments, eligible units of local government, D.C., and U.S. Territories. The CRF must be used for eligible expenses incurred in responding to the public health emergency and second-order effects.

The State of Florida CRF Award was \$8.3 billion:

- State Administered Response - \$5.9 billion
- State - \$4,580,521,589
- Counties Below Population Threshold - \$1,275,285,790
- Counties Above Population Threshold - \$2.5 billion

The full presentation includes details of eligible expenditures, compliance metrics as well as a county-by-county allocations: [download and read it here.](#)

AHCA Secretary and Florida Health Care Association Executive Director Recap COVID Efforts

The Senate Select Committee on Pandemic Preparedness and Response, heard no legislation this week. However, the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and the Florida Health Care Association appeared in the committee for presentations. AHCA Secretary Shevaun Harris recapped the Agency's responsibilities during the pandemic with key priorities being mitigating the spread of the virus in their facilities and protecting the vulnerable populations. This includes ensuring access to care and data, responding with rapid response, and assisting with Florida's vaccination efforts. AHCA discussed the scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the early days of the pandemic and reported that the PPE supply has improved. Secretary Harris emphasized that Florida Medicaid recipients received the care they needed during the pandemic by implementing system flexibilities such as waiving copayments and expanding access to telehealth services. The Florida Health Care Association Executive Director Emmett Reid discussed how the long-term care facilities have been a large focus of the pandemic response because of their vulnerable population. Additionally, Director Reid highlighted the challenges facilities have faced from staffing, supply shortage, fear among residents and families, to requirements from local, state, and federal governments. Fortunately, on average approximately 98% of residents and staff were COVID-free throughout the pandemic.

The full presentation is available online [here.](#)

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Tonnelle Graham at tgraham@flcounties.com.

COVID-19 Updates & Resources

The Life Saving Convention Center: Serving Essential Public Safety Roles During Local Emergencies

The [Orange County Convention Center](#) has become ground zero in the public safety response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Six days a week, thousands of residents are being vaccinated against the coronavirus at the



Convention Center site.

Since the pandemic first hit, the Convention Center has turned from its mission of economic development to a local and regional health care hub. Its remote parking location has successfully administered approximately 300,000 COVID-19 tests since March 2020.

Since December 2020, it has supported the distribution of more than 100,000 vaccines to local residents.

"Being able to move the Office of Emergency Management into the North Concourse during this pandemic has been critical to successfully testing and vaccinating our community," said Lauraleigh Avery, Orange County Emergency Manager. "The Convention staff has also provided invaluable support and has been ready to help with anything we need, including storage of the vaccine."

As one of the nation's largest convention center in the country (7 million sq. ft. total – 2.1 million sq. ft. of exhibitor space), the Orange County Convention Center has ample space to hold a variety of equipment and personnel.

For years, the Orange County Convention Center has served as the state's designated staging area for hundreds of public safety and emergency responder vehicles and aircraft from across the nation during weather emergencies.

[Read online.](#)

HEALTH, SAFETY, & JUSTICE

Bill Protecting Sadowski Trust Fund Sweeps Clears First Senate Committee

[SB510-State Funds](#) by Senator Hooper was heard for the first time in Senate Community Affairs on Tuesday. The bill would prohibit further sweeping of funds from the State and Local Government Housing Trust Funds, known as the Sadowski Affordable Housing Fund. Therefore, the Legislature could no longer transfer these funds to the Budget Stabilization Fund and the General Revenue Fund. FAC waived in support of this bill. The bill passed unanimously 9-0 and moves to Finance and Tax. House companion, HB13, by Representative Killebrew was referenced to its first committee, Infrastructure & Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee, but has not been heard.

Bill Prohibiting Anonymous Complaints by Code Inspectors Passes Senate Committee

[SB60-County and Municipal Code Enforcement](#) by Senator Bradley was heard in Senate Community Affairs on Tuesday. The bill prohibits county and municipal code inspectors from opening an investigation into violations of city or county codes or ordinances through an anonymous complaint. An individual who files a complaint must provide their name and address to county or city officials before an investigation occurs. The bill was amended to exclude code inspectors who find a violation that presents a threat to the public health, safety, or welfare of a community. SB60 passed favorably 6-3 and moves to Governmental Oversight and Accountability. There is no House companion at this time.

Criminal Justice Reform Package Moves Through First Committee

[SB232 Criminal Justice](#) by Senator Brandes was heard in its first committee stop, Senate Criminal Justice. Among other things, the bill requires custodial interrogation in a detention facility be electronically recorded, revises sentence review processes for juvenile offenders, and establishes sentence reviews for young adult offenders. SB232 passed unanimously 7-0 and heads to Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice. Currently, there is no House companion.

Medicaid Coverage for Non-Emergency Ambulances Passes First Committee

[SB348-Medicaid](#) by Senator Ana Rodriguez was heard in Senate Health Policy on Thursday. This bill would require Florida Medicaid to reimburse Medicare crossover claims for non-emergency ambulance services. When an individual is enrolled in both Medicaid and Medicare (dual-eligible), Medicare is the primary payer and Medicaid may cover the cost not paid by Medicare. If Medicare does not pay the full cost of a service, the state Medicaid program decides if Medicaid will cover the difference; this is categorized as a crossover plan. Currently, Medicaid only pays for emergency transportation for crossover claims. Thus, the bill requires Medicaid pay for all services by ambulances. SB348 passed unanimously 9-0 and moves to the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. A similar bill, HB461 by Representative Overdorf has been filed.

Bill Establishing Behavioral Health Care Program for Veterans Passes First Committee

[SB260-Services for Veterans and Their Families](#) by Senator Harrell was heard in Senate Military and Veteran Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security. This bill creates the Florida Veterans' Care Coordination Program through the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The program will provide veterans and their families behavioral health care referral services, especially mental health and substance abuse care followed with goals and follow-up reports. The program will be modeled after the pilot programs established by the Crisis Center of Tampa Bay and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Manatee counties in 2014. SB260 passed the committee 7-0 and moves to its second committee, Children, Families, and Elder Affairs. A similar bill, HB231 by Representative Zika was referenced to its first committee, Local Administration & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee, but has not been heard.

Required Electronic Pamphlet for Nonopioids Alternatives Legislation Passes Senate Committee

[SB530-Nonopioid Alternatives](#) by Senator Perry was heard for the first time in Senate Health Policy. The bill requires health care patients to be given a pamphlet, electronically or printed, containing information on the use of nonopioid alternatives for the treatment of pain. This pamphlet is required to be given to the patient, if the patient receives anesthesia or is prescribed opioid medications. SB530 passed unanimously and heads to its final committee, Rules. There is no House companion at this time.

Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program Extension Clears First Committee

[SB168 Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program](#) by Senator Hooper was heard in Senate Banking and Insurance on Tuesday. SB168 extends the Hurricane Loss Mitigation Program (HLMP) until June 30, 2031. Currently, the HLMP is set to expire on June 30, 2021 along with the annual appropriation of 10 million dollars from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund. The funds are used to improve wind resistance on residences and mobile homes, as well as public hurricane shelters. Passing unanimously, the bill moves to Community Affairs. Currently, there is no House companion.

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Tonnelle Graham at tgraham@flcounties.com.

WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Reclaimed Water Legislation Clears First Senate Committee

[SB64-Reclaimed Water](#) by Senator Albritton was heard for the first time in Senate Environment and Natural Resources. The bill requires local governmental utilities to submit plans to DEP for the elimination of surface water discharges by 11/21/21. The bill provides exceptions for discharge conditions including: when associated with an indirect potable reuse project, wet weather discharge, stormwater management system discharge withdrawn for irrigation purposes, utilities operating 90% reuse of annual average flow, or when discharges provide direct ecological or public water supply benefits. Additionally, the bill provides exceptions for hardship conditions including when a utility demonstrates that the project is: technically, economically, or environmentally infeasible, or the utility is within a fiscally constrained county. The utility must update plans annually to verify hardship conditions. Timelines and plans must be implemented by 1/1/28. The bill was amended in committee to authorize utilities to include conceptual plans for potable reuse projects or projects that provide direct ecological or public water supply, however, those plans cannot extend the timeline for implementation of the plan.

Other provisions in the bill include:

- Authorizes DEP to convene a technical advisory group to coordinate rulemaking and review of reviews for potable reuse
- Specifies that potable reuse is an alternative water supply, for purposes of making reuse projects eligible for alternative water supply funding;
- Incentivizes the development of potable reuse projects;
- Requires each county, municipality, and special district to promote the beneficial reuse of water by authorizing the use of residential graywater technologies within its jurisdiction, requiring such technologies to meet certain requirements, and providing incentives to developers to fully offset the capital costs of the technology.
- Specifies the total dissolved solids allowable in aquifer storage and recovery in certain circumstances

SB 64 passed the committee unanimously. The House companion, HB 263 by Representative Maggard was referenced to its first committee, Environment, Agriculture, and Flooding Subcommittee, but has not been heard.

Bill Honoring Former Commissioner/Representative Kristin Jacobs Passes First Committee

[SB588- Conservations Area Designations/Kristin Jacobs Coral Reef Ecosystem Conservation Area](#) by Senator Book was heard in Senate Environment and Natural Resources on Monday. The legislation renames the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Area to honor former Broward County Commissioner Kristin Jacobs. In 2018, Jacobs passed the legislation creating the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Ecosystem Area which runs from Martin County to Biscayne Bay. FAC waived in support of the bill. SB588 passed favorably 4-0 and moves to Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government. The House companion, HB217 by Representative Hunschofsky was referenced to its first committee, Environment, Agriculture, and Flooding Subcommittee, but has not been heard.

House “Flooding” Committee Hears Presentations on Sea Level Rise and Resiliency

The House Environment, Agriculture, and Flooding Subcommittee lived up to its new name with presentations on Sea Level Rise and Resiliency. DEP Office of Coastal Resiliency Director Alex Reed updated the committee on development of a [Sea Level Rise Impact Projection Study tool](#). This is a web-based tool utilizing GIS and field data to provide information to local governments and the public. The data includes information from sea level impact projection (SLIP) studies. SLIP study report recommendations are non-binding but will allow communities to design for resiliency. The presentation also featured current departmental programs such as the [Florida Adaptation Planning Guidebook & Technical Assistance](#), [Resilience Planning & Implementation Grants](#), and the [Quarterly Coastal Resilience Forum](#). Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association Executive Director Pepper Uchino promoted the state's Coastal Management program. The program receives \$50 million annually in the state budget and provides a high return on investment. Uchino stressed the interconnectivity of beach investment and tourism as well as the coastal resiliency benefits from coral reef protection. American Flood Coalition's Alec Bogdanoff stressed the need for investments in flood infrastructure. McKinsey estimates that Florida property loss values could range as high as \$10-30 billion by 2030. Bogdanoff made the “business case for resilience” showing how local government collaboration and regionalism investments reward local economies with new jobs and increased bond ratings.

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Jeff Scala at jscala@fl-counties.com.

COMMUNITY & URBAN AFFAIRS

Property Rights Bill Moves in House Subcommittee

On Thursday, the House Local Administration and Veterans Affairs Subcommittee considered HB 59, by Rep. McClain, relating to growth management. As originally filed, the bill would make the following changes:

- Requires local governments to include a private property rights element in their comprehensive plans in their next proposed plan amendments or by July 1, 2024, whichever comes first. A local government may develop its own property rights language, if such language does not conflict with the bill's model statement of rights which requires that a local government consider the following four elements in local decision-making:

1. Physical possession and control of the property owner's interests in the property, including easements, leases, or mineral rights;
 2. Use, maintenance, development, and improvement of the property for personal use or the use of any other person, subject to state law and local ordinances;
 3. Privacy and exclusion of others from the property to protect the owner's possessions and property; and
 4. Disposal of the property owner's property through sale or gift.
- Allows developers and local governments to amend or cancel a development agreement without seeking consent from other property owners subject to the agreement, unless the amendment or cancellation would directly modify the allowable uses or entitlements of those properties;
 - Prohibits a municipality from annexing land within another municipality without the latter's consent;
 - Specifies that development agreements for certain developments of regional impact may be amended using the process adopted by the local government for amending development orders; and
 - Requires the Florida Department of Transportation, when selling a parcel of land, to provide a right of first refusal to the prior owner of the land and provides a process for implementing this right of first refusal.
 - The bill provides a declaration that the act fulfills an important state interest.

Before approving the bill, the Committee adopted an amendment to capture the comprehensive land use plans of new municipalities created after January 1, 2016 (as opposed to 2019), for purpose of incorporating all existing land development orders, ensure the completion a development subject to a development order is not impaired, and to vest the density and intensity approved by a development order on the effective date of the new municipality's comprehensive land use plan without limitation or modification. The amendment also removed the municipal annexation provision. The bill passed 12-6 and now heads to the House Civil Justice and Property Rights Subcommittee. A similar bill, SB496 by Senator Perry has been referenced to its first committee, Community Affairs, but has not been scheduled for a hearing yet.

Senate Transportation Committee Members Hear Transportation Sector Presentations

On Tuesday, the Senate Transportation Committee heard several presentations including the 2021 Session legislative priorities for the Department of Transportation and Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. The FDOT's 2021 legislative priorities as presented include the following:

- Increasing the debt service cap for right-of-way acquisition bonds and bridge construction bonds from \$275M to \$350M. The current cap of 275M has not been raised since 2007.
- Exempting the department from having to competitively solicit the services of credit rating agencies. The DOT would like to work with the three major rating agencies, Moody's, Standard & Poor, and Fitch when they need to submit a credit worthiness analysis to the USDOT to receive federal loans funds such as loans under the Transportation Infrastructure and Finance Innovation Act (TIFIA) program.
- Authority to allow consumers who must appear before the Commercial Motor Vehicle Review Board to attend these meeting using their own electronic devices, rather than having consumers attend such meetings from within a DOT building which is now the current practice. Sen. Harrell, the Committee's Chair called it "Zoom for consumers".
- Reinstatement of the authority of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Legislative Budget Commission to approve proposed amendments to the department 5-year Work Program in those instances when the LBC cannot meet within 30 days of the DOT's request.
- Require that MPOs submit their list of priority projects to the department on August 1st of each year, instead of the current timeline of October 1st, given that in even-numbered years Session and budget submissions to the Governor begin earlier.
- Adding DOT road and bridge maintenance and construction vehicles for which travelers on Florida's roadways must move over to a safe lane or slow down under the state's Mover-Over law.
- Administrative and technical issues such as deleting obsolete provisions.

The DHSMV's various priorities are separated into four major areas including: 1) Enforcement Activities relating to human trafficking, the federal PRISM program, seat belt usage and serious disqualifying offense for the denial, suspension, and revocation of an individual's commercial driver's license; 2) Federal Adoption relating to compliance with federal regulations for commercial motor vehicles, commercial driver's license expiration dates, and odometer exemptions; 3) Clerical issues relating to nonpublic sector buses and system names; and 4) The department's Mobile Driver License program.

The Committee also heard presentations from the Florida Airports Council regarding the state of Florida's 20 commercial airports and 108 general aviation airports and how these economic engines have been impacted by the COVID pandemic. Similarly, the Florida Ports Council presented information to Senators about the status of Florida's 15 deep-water ports, impacts from the pandemic and ongoing recovery efforts to bring back cruise ship activities and continued increase in cargo-related trade. Last, the Committee heard about the impacts of COVID-19 on state's various transit agencies from the Florida Public Transportation Association.

For more information, [click here](#).

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Eddy Labrador at elabrador@fl-counties.com.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS

Agritourism and Farmer Liability Protections Legislation Passes First Committee

[SB88- Farming Operations](#) by Senator Brodeur was heard in Senate Judiciary for the first time. The bill amends the Florida Right to Farm Act to include agritourism in the definition of farm operations. Furthermore, the bill provides strong liability protections for farming operations from public and private nuisance lawsuits including agritourism activities. The bill further limits nuisance claims to those which violate existing environmental laws. SB88 passed the committee favorably 10-1 and moves to Environment and Natural Resources. Currently, there is no House companion legislation filed.

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Jeff Scala at jscala@fl-counties.com.

FINANCE, TAX, & ADMINISTRATION

Legal Notices Legislation Survives First Hurdle in House

[HB35- Legal Notices](#) by Representative Fine was heard for the first time in House Civil Justice and Property Rights Subcommittee. HB 35 gives governmental agencies the option to publish legal notices on a publicly accessible website in lieu of newspaper publication if certain conditions are met. Specifically, the bill allows a governmental agency:

- In a non-fiscally constrained county to publish legal notices on a publicly accessible website if online publication costs less than newspaper publication.
- In a fiscally constrained county to publish legal notices on a publicly accessible website after determining, at a publicly noticed meeting, that online publication:
 1. Is in the public interest;
 2. Will cost less than newspaper publication; and
 3. Will not, after accounting for the county's level of internet access, unreasonably restrict legal notice access
- Requires a governmental agency, that publish legal notices on a publicly accessible website, to publish a notice at least once a year in a newspaper of general circulation or other publication mailed and delivered to all residents and property owners in the government's jurisdiction stating that such persons may receive legal notices by first-class mail or e-mail after registering with the governmental agency.
- Allows a governmental agency to publish legal notices in a free newspaper which is not allowed under present law.
- Allows self-service storage facility and self-contained storage unit owners to publish notices of intent to enforce specified liens on a public website customarily used for conducting personal property auctions in lieu of publishing notices in a newspaper.
- Allows persons registering a fictitious name with the Division of Corporations to publish notice of their intention to register the name on a publicly accessible website in lieu of publishing the notice in a newspaper.

After much debate and strong opposition from the newspaper industry, the Committee approved the bill 11-6, and it moves to the House Judiciary Committee, its last committee. A comparable bill, SB402 by Sen. Ray Rodrigues was temporarily postponed last week in its first committee, Judiciary.

Revising Rental of Homestead Property Legislation Passes First

Committee

[SB132 - Rental of Homestead Property](#) by Senator Hutson was heard on Tuesday in Senate Community Affairs. The bill amends [196.061, F.S.](#), to provide an owner that occupies a dwelling while renting out a portion of homestead, is not considered abandonment. The current law holds that a homestead owner will lose homestead property tax exemptions by renting out their property. SB132 passed unanimously 8-0 and moves to Finance and Tax. Currently, there is no House companion bill.

EDR Coordinator Presents on the History of the Funded Status of the Florida Retirement System

The Coordinator of the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Amy Baker, made a presentation Thursday to the Senate Government Oversight and Accountability Committee on the historic funding status of the Florida Retirement System. The presentation provided the history since 1985 for the fund regarding the funding level and outlined the periods when the fund has had an actuarial deficit or surplus. It also provided the current funded level of 82% as of July 1, 2020. There is also a discussion of how revisions to the forecast rate of return for the fund has affected the funded status.

The presentation is available online at [here](#).

Employer Contribution Rates Bill Passes First Committee

[SB7018- Employer Contributions to Fund Retiree Benefits](#) by the Senate Government Oversight and Accountability Committee was heard Thursday in the Senate Government Oversight and Accountability Committee. The committee Chair Senator Ray Rodrigues presented the bill. The bill establishes the employer contribution rates for the Florida Retirement System beginning July 1, 2021. The proposed rates are the same as those proposed in the recently released Governor's Budget Recommendations. The bill passed the committee by a unanimous 6-0 vote. As this is a committee bill, it will go to the President's Office for further references.

Retirement System Legislation Moves Through Senate Committee

[SB84-Retirement](#) by Senator Ray Rodrigues was heard Thursday in the Senate Government Oversight and Accountability Committee. The bill would require eligible employees initially enrolled in the Florida Retirement System on or after July 1, 2022, to be compulsory members of the investment plan and membership in the pension plan would not be permitted for those new members. The bill passed the committee 4-2 and moves to the Appropriations Committee for its final stop. There is no House companion currently filed.

EDR Coordinator Presents on Local Government Revenue Services

The Coordinator of the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, Amy Baker, made a presentation on Local Government Revenue Sources in the House Local Administration and Veteran Affairs Subcommittee on Thursday.

The presentation is available online [here](#).

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Bob McKee at bmckee@fl-counties.com.

PREEMPTION TRACKER

Among Other, Some Preemptions to Look out for This Session

[HB 215 Prohibition of Public Funds for Lobbying by Local Governments](#) by Representative Sabatini, among other things, prohibits a local government from using public funds to retain a lobbyist to represent the local government before the legislative or executive branch. However, a full-time employee of the local government may register as a lobbyist and represent that local government before the legislative or executive branch. Except as a full-time employee, a person may not accept public funds from a local government for lobbying. As of yet, there is no Senate companion and the bill has not been scheduled for any committee agendas.

[HB219/SB 522 Vacation Rentals](#) by Representative Fischer and Senator Diaz preempts the regulation of vacation rentals to the state. This bill prohibits a local law, ordinance, or regulation from allowing or

requiring inspections or licensing of vacation rentals and preempts the regulation of advertising platforms for vacation rentals. HB219 is on the agenda to be heard next Wednesday (2/10) in the House Regulatory Reform Subcommittee. The Senate companion, SB522, was referenced to committee assignments but has not been scheduled on any committee agendas.

[HB 267/SB426 State Preemption of Seaport Regulations](#) by Representatives Roach and Sirois and Senator Boyd preempts to the state the regulation of commerce in state seaports. The bill prohibits a local government from regulating commerce in seaports in the state, including but not limited to, regulating or restricting a vessel's type or size, source or type of cargo, or the number, origin, or nationality of passengers, all matters will be preempted to the state. Under the bill, any provision of a county or municipal charter, ordinance, resolution, regulation, or policy that is preempted by bill and that existed before, on, or after the effective date of the bill, will be automatically voided. Both bills have been referenced to committees but not yet heard.

[SB268/HB745 Preemption of Local Occupational Licensing](#) by Senator Perry preempts licensing of occupations to the state and prohibits local government from imposing or modifying additional licensing requirements unless specified. Under the bill, "licensing" means any training, education, test, certification, registration, or license that is required for a person to perform an occupation. Any licensing of occupations authorized by general law is exempt from the preemption. Also, the bill authorizes counties and municipalities to issue journeyman licenses in the plumbing, pipe fitting, mechanical, electrical, alarm system, or HVAC trades. A similar bill, HB745 by Senator Harding was filed on Wednesday but has not been referenced to committees.

[SB856 State Preemption of Energy Infrastructure Regulations](#) by Senator Hutson provides that regulation of the construction of energy infrastructure is preempted to the state. Local governments cannot implement any regulations that restrict new construction or that expands, repairs, or updates existing energy infrastructure. SB856 has been referenced to committees but not heard. As of yet, there is no House companion.

[View the Full 2021 Preemption Tracker Online](#)

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Eddy Labrador at elabrador@fl-counties.com.

UPDATE ON ACCESS 67 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE

DEO Broadband Regional Workshops

The Florida Office of Broadband has partnered with the Florida Regional Councils Association to host 10 virtual workshops where participants will discuss broadband internet accessibility. Industry sector and community leaders within each region have been invited to participate.



These industry sectors include education, healthcare, private business, community organizations, agriculture, tourism, parks and recreation, economic development, local governments and internet service providers. The workshops began on January 27th and will conclude on February 12th. For a full schedule of workshops please visit <https://www.fl-counties.com/access-67>. If you would like more information on the meetings and how to listen in, please contact Katie Smith with the Florida Office of Broadband at Katie.Smith@deo.myflorida.com.

Released on Thursday, January 28th, the Governor's 2021-22 Proposed Budget includes the following relating to broadband.

- Rural Broadband: \$1.6 million recommended for grants to local governments to Florida rural communities to assist them with expanding broadband capability and availability.
- Rural Infrastructure Fund: \$5 million for the to support local rural infrastructure projects such as broadband, roads, storm and wastewater systems, and telecommunications facilities.

To view FAC's full analysis, [click here](#).

Local Government Efficiency Task Force

The 2020 Legislature created the Local Government Efficiency Task Force via [Ch. 2020-114, Laws of Florida](#). The law directs the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability to provide the task force research support. The purpose of the task force is to review the governance structure and function of local governments and determine if changes are necessary to make such governments more efficient. The task force's final report is due by June 1, 2021. The task force held their second meeting on January 20, 2021. FAC was asked to present a top five list of efficiency issues to the task force as they move forward with creation of a report that will be presented to the Governor, Senate President and House Speaker. The task force has county representation including Commissioner Carol Whitmore (Manatee County) was selected as Chair; and former Councilman Ed Kelley (Volusia County) and former Commissioner Paul Caragiulo (Sarasota County). As FAC continues to monitor the activities of this task force, FAC will reach out to the county managers and county attorneys to gain input and expertise relating to efficiency issues.

1/20/21 Meeting Materials

12/1/20 Meeting Materials

1/20/21 Meeting Video

12/1/20 Meeting Video

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Tiffany Henderson at thenderson@fl-counties.com.

DATA POINT #3: COVID-19 IMPACTS ON FOOD SECURITY

COVID-19 Impacts on Food Insecurity

In the past year, COVID-19 has proven to be a challenge in fighting food insecurity across the state. Addressing food insecurity not only improves long term healthcare but has a positive impact on the community. Feeding Florida emphasizes the increased demand on food supplies and the growing wage gaps as more Floridians struggle to feed their families in times of crisis. Unfortunately, food insecurity trends indicate an increase over the next five years before returning to pre-pandemic numbers. It is estimated that 3.5 million Floridians will be food insecure over the next five years.

At the 2020 Legislative Conference, FAC adopted food insecurity as one of its guiding principles. FAC supports increased state funding and policies that reduce food insecurity among Floridians. In order to increase the health and access to healthy foods, consequently, reduce the demand for public health and human services, improve financial security to those in need, and accelerate and increase the resiliency of Florida's economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRE-COVID TIMES



2.8
MILLION
FLORIDIANS
includes 819,000
children were
food insecure



404
MILLION LBS
of food distributed
last fiscal year
(38% increase from FY 18/19)
(Feeding Florida)



16
MILLION
meals missed
each week



5.6
MILLION LBS
were distributed
each week
(Feeding Florida)

COVID TIMES



3.6
MILLION
FLORIDIANS
INCLUDES
1.5 MILLION KIDS
were food insecure



564
MILLION LBS
of food on trend to
be distributed
in FY 20/21
(almost doubled from FY 18/19)
(Feeding Florida)



19
MILLION
meals missed
each week



9-10
MILLION LBS
are distributed each
week, with the
highest peak in
COVID being
12.7 million lbs.
(Feeding Florida)

FAC Contact:

For additional information, please contact Sara Henley at shenley@fl-counties.com.