



St. Lucie County

Legislative Update

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Our Mission....

To provide service, infrastructure and leadership necessary to advance a safe and sustainable community, maintain a high quality of life, and protect the natural environment for all our citizens.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES SEPARATE HOUSE AND SENATE

While high-profile fights over a new \$250 million "Florida Enterprise Fund" have dominated discussion of Florida's economic development plans, the two chambers have an almost equally large disagreement over spending on affordable housing programs.

The Senate's budget allocates \$185.8 million to the State Housing Incentive Partnership (SHIP) program and another \$125 million to other affordable housing programs, half of which must go to the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program. The House budget, however, spends \$141 million total on SHIP and SAIL combined -- \$94.4 million on SAIL and another \$47 million on SHIP.

Overall, the Senate spends over \$100 million more on housing programs than the House.

The two chambers must deal with the incentive issue as well: the House budget allocates \$18 million for economic incentive programs including like the Qualified Target Industry programs, but lacks the \$250 million Enterprise Fund included in the Senate budget.

And while both chambers agree to provide \$80 million to Visit Florida, the state's tourism marketing agency, the Senate allocates only \$15 million to Enterprise Florida, compared to the House's \$23.5 million position.

In total the Senate budget provides about \$43 million more to the Department of Economic Opportunity than the House budget.

ALTMAN AMENDMENT TO ISSUE BOND FOR LAND BUYING FAILS ON TECHNICALITY

An amendment to the Senate's annual budget that would have issued \$22.5 billion in bonds to fund land acquisition through the Florida Forever program failed due to a technical objection raised by Senate Majority Leader Bill Galvano, R-Bradenton.

Galvano brought a point of order against the amendment because he said it would have violated the budget procedures established by Sen. Tom Lee, R-Brandon, which prohibited amendments that added too much money to the original budget and the use of nonrecurring money to fund recurring budget items.

Sen. David Simmons, R-Altamonte Springs, chair of the Senate's Committee on Rules, agreed with Galvano's objection, killing the amendment.



Watch Session Live:**Connect with
St. Lucie County!****Mark Satterlee**

Deputy County Administrator

Bob Adolphe

Deputy County Administrator

Nicole Fogarty

Legislative Affairs Manager

Mailing Address**2300 Virginia Avenue
Fort Pierce, FL 34982****PHONE****(772) 462-1100****TDD****(772) 462-1428****FAX****(772) 462-2131****e-mail****fogarty@stlucieco.org****website****www.stlucieco.gov****EXECUTIVE AGENCIES TELL FEDS TO SEND WATER SOUTH**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission issued orders Feb. 11, 2016, allowing feds to move more water through Shark River Slough in the Everglades, instead of the coasts.

Southwest Floridians are afraid the water releases will hurt the Caloosahatchee River and Gulf waters, which will then hurt tourism and other businesses.



Corps officials couldn't be reached Thursday evening, but Scott earlier Thursday sent out a memo to the Corps with the option of sending water south. The Corps responded that the water storage area Scott wanted to send the overflows to was already flooded.

SENATE ADVANCES BILL SEEKING TO END DJJ COST SHARE DISPUTE

After years of legal battles, a Florida Senate panel Feb. 11, 2016 approved a bill aimed at resolving a dispute about how juvenile-detention costs are shared between the state and counties.

The Senate Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations Subcommittee unanimously approved a measure (SB 1322), filed by Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, that would create a new cost-sharing formula while putting past quarrels to rest.

The measure would divide the cost of detaining young offenders equally between the state Department of Juvenile Justice and county governments, replacing a formula currently requiring the counties to pay 57 percent and the state to pay 43 percent.

It also would eliminate a billing process in which counties pay their annual estimated costs in advance. Latvala said the affected counties -- "many of which have active court cases going on against the state now" -- would commit to the bill with the understanding that all their litigation would be dropped. St. Lucie County passed their resolution just this last week agreeing to drop litigation if the policy change becomes law.

"For me to support the bill, we have to have all the counties," Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, said. "I personally want to see -- contingent on the bill passing and becoming law, of course -- releases and dismissals with prejudice of litigation if (the bill) passes and is signed into law by the governor."

His bill heads now to its final Senate committee. The House companion (HB 1279), filed by his son, Rep. Chris Latvala, R-Clearwater, is scheduled to be heard next week.

CHAMBERS PASS DIFFERENT BUDGETS AND CONFERENCE

The Florida House and Senate have passed two different budgets and agreed to enter into budget conference negotiations to work out the differences.

The House passed its budget in the morning. The Senate took up the House budget bills in the afternoon, attached amendments with its language and passed them.

Having failed to pass the same budget, the Senate conceded to enter into negotiations.

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FEDERAL UPDATE

Provided by Van Scoyoc Associates

Obama's Final Budget Seeks Over \$4.1 Trillion

President Barack Obama proposed a \$4.15 trillion fiscal 2017 budget Tuesday. The White House stated that it contains some proposals that could win bipartisan support, even though Republicans were scathing in their criticism of what's likely to be the administration's last complete fiscal plan. Several of the proposals from last year's budget became law, including raising the discretionary spending caps and passing straight appropriations bills. In his proposal, Obama seeks \$4.15 trillion in budget authority in the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, partly funded with \$3.64 trillion in revenue.

The administration projects \$4.15 trillion in actual spending measured as outlays during the fiscal year, resulting in a deficit of \$503 billion. The budget reflects the fiscal 2017 discretionary spending caps agreed to in the budget deal. But as was the case with previous blueprints, the 10-year plan proposes to repeal the sequester-lowered discretionary caps and the across-the-board cuts to mandatory spending programs in subsequent years, beginning in fiscal 2018. Read more: Washington Post

Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization

On Thursday, February 11, the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met to mark up legislation that reauthorizes the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for six years. H.R. 4441, the Aviation Innovation, Reform, and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act, reported out of committee on a vote of 32 to 26, contains, among other things, a significant provision that creates an independent, not-for-profit corporation outside of the federal government to oversee America's air traffic control (ATC) system and provide air traffic services. During the markup process the Committee considered over 70 amendments that addressed a variety of issues such as the ATC spinoff, electronic cigarettes, regulation of lithium batteries, package delivery by commercial drones, and an Uber-type passenger sharing initiative for private pilots. The legislation would require certain repair station employees responsible for safety-sensitive maintenance functions on specific air carrier aircraft be subject to an alcohol and controlled substances testing program. In addition, the legislation requires certain repair station employees performing a safety-sensitive functions on an air carrier aircraft undergo "a pre-employment background investigation sufficient to determine whether the individual presents a threat to aviation safety." The bill requires airlines to refund baggage fees for bags delayed more than 24 hours on domestic flights, and it authorizes the Department of Transportation to establish a smartphone application for consumer complaints. The AIRR Act requires large- and medium-sized airports to provide private rooms in every terminal for nursing mothers. Finally, with respect to aircraft safety, the bill grants the FAA access to information or data in the possession of certain air carriers "related to the frequency and seriousness of any corrective actions" implemented on aircraft following "heavy maintenance work" at a foreign repair station. The bill next heads to the full House for debate. The bill still faces bipartisan and bicameral opposition so it remains to be seen if the legislation in its current form can be adopted by both Houses of Congress. As a reminder, current FAA authorities will expire on March 31, 2016.

Emergency Spending Bills Loom in Front of Newly Unveiled Budget

Several stand-alone spending bills were introduced which now need to compete with the overall budget release. Lawmakers already are clamoring for immediate funding to address a host of emergencies in the U.S. and abroad, including: the Zika virus, the Flint, Michigan water crisis, the struggling Iraqi Kurds and opioid/heroin abuse. The next step for each proposal remains unclear as lawmakers continue to grapple over the price tags and legislative paths. Despite some talk of combining supplemental appropriations for multiple crises, each emergency at the moment seems to be winding its own way through Congress.

At the moment, a federal response to the Zika virus appears to have the best prospects for bipartisan action. The Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations panel heard from administration officials on Thursday February 11, on the president's \$1.8 billion proposal to expand mosquito control programs, establish rapid response teams, support containment efforts in affected countries and other initiatives.

